

NEW STATESMAN

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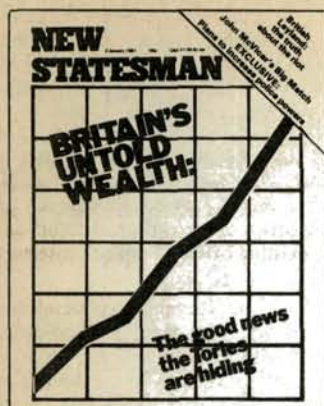
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The good news the Tories are hiding

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Leyland:
the truth
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EXCLUSIVE:
Plans to increase police powers



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The Tory plot to conceal Britain's untold wealth

NOT FOR THE first time, the Treasury is cooking the books. As we report on pages 4 and 5 of this week's NS, official projections of future government revenues from North Sea oil are substantially, and implausibly, lower than the projections of independent forecasters. At first sight this may appear a somewhat arcane point, even trivial set against such prominent matters as this week's infighting among Conservative fund-raisers, or the future of breakfast television.

In fact, the Treasury's deceit is central to the Thatcher government's survival strategy. One clue that something serious is happening is in the direction of the Treasury's distortion. Usually its mandarins massage its figures to present an optimistic justification of any government's policies. In the mid-70s, for example, Labour's pre-IMF hopes for a growth in public spending were accompanied by wholly ridiculous projections for economic growth, which would pay for Labour's ambitions. Such book-cooking was naughty, but normal.

This time, however, the Treasury is distorting the figures *downwards*. It is painting a picture of unjustified gloom.

A second clue that the Treasury is hiding a peculiarly sensitive secret is its unwillingness to explain how it has done its oil revenue sums. There are, of course, some things the Treasury is always coy about: its assumptions about the future course of the exchange rate, for example. But there are elements in its oil revenue calculations where reticence is manifestly unjustifiable. The Treasury refuses to say what assumptions about production levels underlie its sums — even though the Department of Energy, a few hundred yards away along Millbank, publishes annual forecasts of production *ranges*. What is the Treasury trying to hide?

Nor will the Treasury split its forecast into its component parts: corporation tax, royalties, and Petroleum Revenue Tax. The exact division may not affect the large economic questions of how to spend the revenues; but it would help independent analysts to understand in specific terms why the forecasts differ, and hence to judge the quality of the Treasury's sums. But that, needless to say, is just what the Treasury is afraid of.

It is afraid for good reason. The Tories are engaged in an old-fashioned class war. Their assault on the public sector generally and the welfare state in particular: their willingness to tolerate unemployment heading towards three million: even their willingness to sacrifice company profits for two or three years as the price to pay for weakening the power of trade unions... it no longer takes what Shirley Williams calls the 'illegitimate left' to point that out.

But naturally the Government cannot describe its objective with such awesome clarity. It needs to describe its policies in terms of objective necessity, usually coupling economic arguments with medical metaphors — nursing Britain back to health after a painful illness, and

so on. Then, with its immediate class objectives achieved, it will suddenly discover, as the next election approaches, that it will have plenty of money with which to bribe its victims with tax cuts, to help win the next election. Nor are the Tories likely to forget their friends in the City. A surge of oil revenues will allow the Government to cut both taxes *and* public sector borrowing. The City will find itself with billions more pounds of other people's money with which to invest or speculate at will. Whether those who seek to make a living out of manufacturing will benefit much is doubtful; that those who make their living dealing on the stock exchange will reap a bonanza is a near certainty.

LABOUR'S TASK, faced with this enormous and cynical rip-off, is essentially two-fold. First, it needs to burrow into the detail of the Government's deceit. Some Labour MPs on the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee have made a start, but much more needs to be done.

It is not always attractive to conduct public political debates in terms of specifics, or numbers. And the temptation for Labour leaders simply to mock the absurd totality of the Tory record is considerable. But that totality may not look nearly so absurd when the next election comes: which is why Labour needs to penetrate now the careful, and often well-concealed lies on which the Tory strategy is based. To turn William Blake round: bad, as well as good, is done in minute particulars.

Labour's second task is to devise alternative policies for Britain's petro-sterling economy. Labour politicians often seem too obsessed with revisiting old battle grounds to realise that the real war is being fought on new territory. If Labour returns to power in 1983 or 1984 the circumstances will be very different from the 1960s and 70s — both the problems and the opportunities posed by oil will be vastly greater.

There will be elbow room to do many things: improve Britain's schools and hospitals; intervene imaginatively in industry; reshape our grotesquely distortive tax system; achieve the redistribution of wealth that it failed to touch last time; above all, create an economic growth strategy that insulates Britain in some measure from the next world trade recession.

To list the ambitions is easy, of course. To implement them effectively will be difficult — both intrinsically, and because these aspirations will have to compete with the need for a rational long-term oil depletion policy. At the very least Labour will need to match the skill and determination that, despite the present state of the economy, the Conservative leadership appears to possess in frightening abundance.

NEXT WEEK

Does Britain really need South Africa?

The new powers of the police

Sweeping increases in police power are urged in the report of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, due for publication at the end of next week. A copy of the report has been examined by the *New Statesman*.



The dissidents? Jack Jones and Rev. Wilfred Woods

● **Arrest without warrant** is extended to all offences punishable by imprisonment — and, in some situations, to offences punishable only by fine. (Until now, arrest without warrant has generally been limited to crimes which can attract a five-year jail term.)

● **No search warrant** will be required to enter premises, even in advance of an arrest, if the police consider that an 'urgent' search must be made for prohibited goods. And after arrest, a suspect's premises will be open to search, without warrant, for evidence: the Commission regards this merely as codification of a police practice which has long been established by custom (though not, till now, firmly sanctioned by law).

● **Indefinite detention without charge** will no longer be challengeable through habeas corpus. Where 'grave' crime is alleged — corruption, and sexual offences qualify, as well as threats to life — the police will be able to detain for 24 hours, and then seek extension to 48 hours through private hearing before a magistrate. After 48 hours, they will be able to apply, still in private, for any number of further 24-hour extensions: if granted, these will be lawful, thus generally defeating a habeas corpus writ.

● **Rights to legal advice** are nominally extended, but in 'grave' matters the police will have discretion to refuse access to a lawyer. Suspects will have the right of appeal to higher courts against orders for indefinite detention

— but the more serious their predicament, the less capacity they will have to enforce it.

● **Fingerprinting** of suspects will no longer require a magistrate's order, and the police will be able to fingerprint and photograph children of 10.

● **A code of suspects' rights** is proposed as a counterbalance to the new police powers: this is designed to prevent unfair pressure, and is to be incorporated into the criminal statutes. But the Commission rejects the idea that there should be any sanction — other than internal police discipline — for breaches of the code.

● **Confessions** and other evidence will still be admissible, even if improperly obtained — for instance, after a long period of detention granted to the

police on the basis of misleading statements to the supervising magistrate. The Commission dismisses American and Australian arguments which suggest that wrongly-obtained evidence must be excluded from a prosecution.

The report makes one concession to civil liberties campaigners, by proposing that the decision on whether to prosecute should be removed from the police. But the difference between the new office of 'crown prosecutor' and the existing office of police prosecutor is not spelt out clearly.

Otherwise, the report will be taken as a victory for the 'law-and-order' lobby. But its proposals are bound to cause major controversy, especially as the text admits that two members of the 16-strong Commission — its chairman was Professor Sir Cyril Philips — disagree strongly with the proposals for increased police power, and believe they will lead to serious difficulties with the public if actually made into law. The 'dissidents' are not identified, but they are believed to be Jack Jones OM, former general secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union, and the Rev. Wilfred Woods, Canon of Southwark.

On page 6 Harriet Harman of the National Council for Civil Liberties gives a detailed analysis of the Royal Commission's Report.

THE ATTORNEY General's marked reluctance to pursue those who incite racial hatred has been demonstrated again by his decision not to prosecute the Merseyside organiser of a National Socialist cell. The reasoning behind the decision is the strangest yet advanced. The Liverpool man who produced typewritten newsletters called *Liverpool Stormtrooper* apparently sent them only to organisations known for their anti-racist views. Therefore, runs the Attorney General's argument, such limited publication is hardly likely to stir up racial hatred even though in his opinion it did 'fall squarely within the category of material proscribed by . . . the Public Order Act.'

This bizarre argument has been aired before, but in more predictable quarters. In 1979 defence counsel for two men charged with inciting racial hatred argued that prosecution witnesses proved the opposite point. The witnesses were outraged and therefore it was not racial hatred but sympathy for black people which had been whipped up. A jury, perhaps influenced by this argument, acquitted the accused on the racial hatred charges. Since those who have been converted to racial hatred are unlikely to appear as witnesses against their proselytisers the Attorney General appears to be conceding that where there is the possibility of this defence, originally only a straw to be clutched at, the likelihood of prosecution is substantially reduced.

The *Liverpool Stormtrooper* decision is troubling the Commission for Racial Equality, which has become increasingly disconcerted by the Attorney General's unwillingness to use the Public Order Act against those who stir up racial hatred. CRE Legal Adviser Francis Deutsch says: 'The Attorney General is not being at all forceful in implementing the law.'

Since the Public Order Act was amended three years ago to control incitement to racial hatred the

Rob Rohrer and Derek Massey report on the activities of Liverpool's nazis

Racist lawbreaker goes free



Kenneth Usher, inset; behind, Edge Hill, Liverpool

Attorney General has authorised only a handful of prosecutions. Each year CRE lawyers scrutinise hundreds of documents thought to break the law. About 50 are sent on to the Attorney General because CRE experts think there is a *prima facie* case worth pursuing in the courts. But in only one or two cases does the Attorney General act against the authors.

Inevitably, the infrequency of prosecution has emboldened the racist propagandists, and schools particularly are finding themselves popular targets for leafletting. The author of *Liverpool Stormtrooper* was a 'Paul Anderson' — an alias used by a 22 year old storekeeper called Kenneth Usher. Usher was fined £100 last month for daubing a swastika on the Liverpool offices of Merseyside Community Relations Council.

USHER IS the organiser of a National Socialist group on Merseyside. But although he has held these views for some time it appears he only recently attempted to join the Dublin-based National Socialist Party of the United Kingdom (NSPUK). In his application and supporting letter — obtained by the *New Statesman* — he outlines his intentions and his activities. He talks of plans for a 'campaign of massive propaganda to promote NSPUK on Merseyside', a promise which despite its optimism might still interest the Attorney General's over-cautious advisers.

Usher wrote to the NSPUK: 'We printed a newsletter which was . . . just for the reds and kikes, we called it *Liverpool Stormtrooper*. It was edited by a person called Paul Anderson (myself).' NSPUK's offensive wall stickers, however, were destined for a

wider circulation, as Usher points out. 'In one night we put up 1,000 stickers before 10 pm and another 500 after 10.30 pm . . . you couldn't walk down a street without seeing 'nigger this, nigger that' everywhere'.

'Next,' boasts Usher, 'We attacked the place where the Anti Nazi rag is printed and published. With a 4ft x 4ft Swastika on their newly-painted wall, this must have been too much for our racially sub-human opponents. Next thing we knew the S.B. hit us.' For this offence Usher was fined £100 for criminal damage to the CRC office and ordered to pay £115 damages. His letter to NSPUK, which ends 'For Adolf Hitler, Kenn Usher', is now in the hands of Merseyside police.

Usher's application to NSPUK gives his postal address as PO Box 52, Liverpool. GPO records show this box, until October last year, was allocated variously to the National Front and one George Marshall, a known League of St George sympathiser.

In his NSPUK application Usher also lists his skills as 'political writer/propagandist' and gives his reason for wanting to join — to free 'the white race from Jewish enslavement'. Usher's newsletters — including a series called *National Socialist News* — show the same penchant for violence exhibited by the National Front and the British Movement. 'Fellow nazis,' are urged to have a 'good scum-bashing New Year' and 'if members see sellers of the Marxist rag *News line* selling in a pub you are right to kick his or her fucking head in.'

These explicit incitements to violence, accompanied by plentiful abuse of potential targets, are thought by the Attorney General to be insufficient, because of their selective distribution, to warrant prosecution. Francis Deutsch says 'The fact that a leaflet is not widely distributed should not mean the authors can get away with breaking the law.'

How the Tories plan to steal Britain

Unemployment heading towards three million . . . monetarism in disarray . . . Labour well ahead in the polls . . . yet some ministers think they can win the next election with ease. Is it blind faith — or do they know something the rest of us don't? PETER KELLNER unearths the hidden roots of Conservative confidence.

AT WESTMINSTER messages of hope are being transmitted in whispers from ministers to worried backbenchers. Hope is vitally needed because, by every visible symbol of economic performance, the Government's policies are proving disastrous for industry and jobs. Yet nobody dare shout the messages out loud. To do so would be to expose how cruelly unnecessary are Mrs Thatcher's present policies.

The contents of the whispered messages vary. But in their most sophisticated form they go something like this. 'Don't worry, old chap. Of course life will be grim for the next year or so, and I'm sure businessmen are grumbling as loudly in your constituency as they are in mine. They think monetarism won't work, you have your doubts and, to tell the truth, I'm pretty sceptical myself.

'But even if monetarism doesn't work, things will pick up in time for the next election. The recession will bottom out before too long — even most anti-monetarist economists agree that. Unemployment will still be dire for a good

while to come, but the figures should be moving down at a handy rate by 1983.

'We shall also have the constituency boundary changes through: that will be worth an extra dozen seats to us.

'But our biggest asset is North Sea oil. The Treasury is handing out some fairly cautious figures for public consumption; but you can take it from me that we'll be swimming, absolutely sunbathing, in oil revenues. Tax cuts, more money for schools and hospitals: you name it, we'll be spending it.

'So just sit tight, and please don't rock the boat. Hold on to the autumn of '83 or the spring of '84, and the next election will be ours. But do keep it under your hat, old chap; we don't want too many people to know what we're really up to.'

FEW IDEAS appeal more to desperate politicians than that of the *deus ex machina*: witness Harold Wilson's faith that oil sanctions would end Rhodesia's rebellion in 'weeks rather than

months', or Lyndon Johnson's hopes that B-52 bombing raids would destroy the Vietcong, or even Hitler's manic expectations of the V-2 rocket.

It therefore takes only a modest dose of political sense today to picture Tory leaders dreaming up plausible but phantom hopes to hand down to despairing MPs. And, of course, we should approach all Conservative predictions of economic rescue and electoral revival with due scepticism. But we should not dismiss the Tory hopes. Just occasionally *machinas* do contain the odd *deus* or two.

The evidence on North Sea Oil (discussed below) and electoral trends (see facing page) suggests that the Tories will indeed acquire some formidable assets between now and the next general election. It is certain that Labour will need a greater swing than at any election since 1945 to regain power; and it is almost certain that Labour will face a government that has managed to cut taxes sharply in the run up to the election.

The seismic effect of North Sea oil has already been felt by industry and by consumers. In the dog days of the last Labour government, when sober economists talked of the pound falling below \$1.50, the notion of sterling climbing back above \$2 was thought a pipe-dream, and the suggestion that it would reach \$2.40, a joke in poor taste.

What lies in the North Sea?

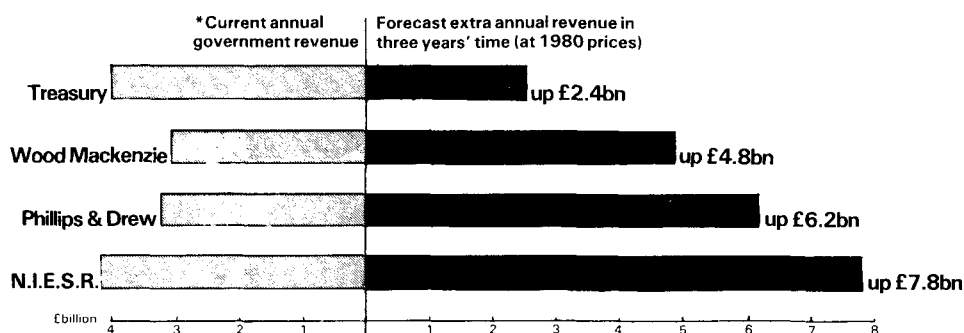
The chart shows the latest published forecasts for government revenues from the North Sea in three years' time. In each case the calculations are made after allowing for general inflation: in money-of-the-day terms the increases (and the differences between the forecasts) will be even greater.

The most optimistic forecast comes from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. It anticipates revenues trebling to £12 billion by 1983/4 — while the Treasury expects a rise of just 60 per cent to £6½ billion.

The National Institute expects an annual ten per cent rise in the real price of oil — over and above general inflation. It is reckoning that North Sea oil will fetch \$62 a barrel by 1983, compared with today's \$40 a barrel. It is an awesome prospect for consumers (involving petrol at almost £2 a gallon) — but remember that world oil prices have doubled since the spring of 1979. If the institute is right, the rise in oil revenues over the next three years will permit a 5p cut in income tax and a 3 per cent cut in VAT — and still leave £2 billion over for extra public spending.

Wood Mackenzie and Phillips & Drew both assume that the dollar price of oil rises broadly in line with inflation, and therefore stays constant in real terms. The main difference between them is that WM also assumes a constant exchange rate of £2.40 to the \$, while P&D expects a slowly falling exchange rate. Since world oil prices are set in dollars, a declining exchange rate means that the price of oil (like, say, the price of a foreign holiday) would rise in sterling terms. P&D's exchange rate assumption of a pound worth \$2.19 by 1983 largely explains why its revenue forecasts are a little higher than WM's. Either way, the government would have room for a 5p cut in income tax, and a restoration of quite a few public spending cuts.

How fast will North Sea revenues grow?



* 'Current' refers to tax year 1980/1 in the case of the Treasury and NIESR, and 1980 in the case of Wood Mackenzie and Phillips & Drew. 'Three years time' equally refers to 1983/4, for Treasury and NIESR, and 1983 for WM and P&D. Sources: Hansard, 22 April 1980, written answers, col. 127; Wood Mackenzie North Sea Report no. 91, November 1980; Phillips & Drew Economic Forecasts, December 1980; National Institute Economic Review, November 1980.

Making sense of the Treasury's forecast is more difficult. It certainly assumes a constant real dollar price of oil; but little else is known about how it does its sums. The Treasury never says what its exchange rate forecasts are; in the case of oil revenues, however, its reticence extends rather further. Last April Ken Woolmer, a Labour MP on the Treasury select committee of MPs, asked Sir Geoffrey Howe to break down the government's forecast of revenues into its component parts — royalties, petroleum revenue tax, and corporation tax. Howe's answer? 'No. It is not the practice to do so.'

Next Woolmer asked Howe to supply the assumptions of oil and gas production in the years to 1983/4, for the purposes of the revenue forecasts. Howe said: 'No.' (The Department of Energy publishes forecasts of production *ranges*: but it is impossible to tell what figures inside — or outside — those ranges are employed in the Treasury fore-

casts for public consumption.)

What makes the comparison between the Treasury and the other forecasts even odder is that the Treasury is expecting no real increase at all in North Sea revenues between 1982/3 and 1983/4. Yet according to the independent forecasters — and, indeed to the economists at BP, which pays more tax than any other North Sea operator — 1982 to 1984 is exactly when the greatest surge in petroleum revenue tax will occur. This is partly because production levels will still be rising, but more because tax allowances against the massive capital expenditures of the 1970s will be tapering away.

If, for all that, the Treasury's forecasts are right, then there will be only room for a 3p cut in income tax. Clearly the Treasury is making some unusual assumptions to produce its results. Now I am not saying it is doing this, and concealing the potential good news, for crude political reasons . . . damn it, yes I am.

Yet such has been the trajectory of the petro-pound. The results have been bad for industry but good for consumers. Exports have been priced out of world markets (a shame if you work, or used to work, in manufacturing), while imports have been getting cheaper in real terms (nice if you have a secure job).

North Sea oil has also been good for government revenues. Taxes and royalties from the North Sea have grown from £522 million to £4,100 million in the last two years alone.

SO WHY HAVE there not been enormous tax cuts already? VAT has almost doubled under the Tories, and the average wage earner now loses a greater share of his pay in tax and national insurance than he did two years ago. Surely the Tories could have easily implemented their election promise to cut taxes?

There are complicated ways of answering that question, mainly to do with policies towards government borrowing. There is also a simple answer. Britain is in recession. Output fell 3 per cent in 1980. Every one per cent fall in output adds around £1 billion to government borrowing, in lost taxes and extra spending on unemployment and social security benefits. Give or take a little, *the oil revenues have paid the Government's bills for the recession.*

For the next year or so the story will be the same, on the Government's present policies; taxes may even rise a little further. But from 1982 on, as some sort of economic recovery gets under way, the oil revenues that pour into the Government's coffers will be available for other things — tax cuts, a growth in public spending, or a mixture of the two.

How much money is, of course, the vital question. If the Treasury's published figures are right, then oil revenues will flatten out between 1982/3 and 1983/4 — precisely the time when the Government will be looking to the money it would like for a pre-election giveaway budget. But if the independent forecasters are anywhere near correct, then, as the analysis on the left shows, the scope for generosity will be considerable. Instead of rising oil revenues offsetting falling output, as is happening now, rising revenues and economic growth (even if fairly sluggish) are likely to combine to give the Government quite remarkable room for manoeuvre — even without unpicking the remaining tattered threads of monetarism.

On the face of it, it seems odd that the bleak view of future North Sea revenues should come from the Treasury. It is in the interests of independent forecasters to be accurate — either for the sake of their reputation (in the case of the National Institute) or, in the case of stock-brokers like Wood Mackenzie and Phillips & Drew, to give their clients useful information from which they can make money.

The Treasury's interest, on the other hand, is to square its similar desire to be proved right, with the need to publish projections that support government strategy. That usually means erring on the rosy side of reality, as any Treasury-watcher can attest. I myself have daubed some of my favourite insults on the wall of Treasury optimism over the years.

Yet oil revenues, the growth of which lie at the very heart of Conservative survival prospects, the Treasury is manifestly more cautious than anyone else, and by a mile. How come?

IT IS DIFFICULT to devise an innocent explanation in the absence of details about how the Treasury does its sums. We know that the revenues are highly sensitive to the assumptions fed

Labour's 64-seat question

Labour will need a swing of about seven per cent at the next general election to secure an overall majority in the House of Commons. This would be by some margin the biggest swing since the war — 1½ points more than the swing that put Margaret Thatcher into Downing Street, and more than twice as great as the 1964 swing to Labour that ended 13 years of Conservative rule.

Three reasons combine to make Labour's task harder than it used to be. The first is that the next election will be fought on new boundaries. The exact configuration of most new seats is not yet known, but a likely outcome is that Labour will 'lose' and the Conservatives 'gain' around 12 seats from the changes, even without any elector changing his or her vote. This is because a number of urban seats, with clear Labour majorities, have small and declining populations, and will be merged — while outside the cities, semi-rural areas with growing populations will gain extra seats; and these will normally be Conservative.

Separately, Ulster will have five extra seats, raising the total number of MPs at Westminster from 635 to 640. The table shows the outcome: on the present boundaries, Labour needs to gain 49 seats to win an overall majority; on the new boundaries, the problem will be to gain 64 seats.

That, of course, means winning 64 marginals. Which brings us to the second problem:

How the voting went in 1979

	Actual result	Result with new boundaries
Conservative	339	351
Labour	269	257
Liberal	11	11
Nationalists	4	4
Ulster seats	12	17
Total	635	640
Seats needed for overall majority	318	321
	Labour 49 short	Labour 64 short

into the equation: for example, a ten per cent rise in the world price of oil increases the Government's income from taxes and royalties by £1 billion. However, the one thing the Treasury does say is that it is assuming oil prices rise in line with inflation. If that is so, then these are some of the possibilities:

1. The Treasury expects lower production than figures published by the Department of Energy. But in that case, the Government ought to explain the discrepancy.

2. The Treasury expects oil companies to find ways of avoiding some of the taxes they appear to be liable for. In that case, new policies are needed for tackling the problem.

3. The Treasury expects a further substantial rise in the value of sterling over the next three years (This would have the effect of lowering the real sterling price of oil, and hence depressing profits and taxes). In that case, there are many people — industrialists above all — who would like to book a bare-knuckle discussion with the Prime Minister.

Whatever the mechanism, there is, I believe, a more fundamental reason for the Treasury's public pessimism. It is that if the Government gave official blessing to the projections of the bonanza the other forecasters expect, then its present economic strategy would be untenable. Like any household or business that knows money is coming its way, but not just yet, it could bridge the gap without cutting back on current expenditure. Even on monetarist prin-

there are fewer marginals than there once were. In the 1950s and 1960s, 90 to 100 seats were held by each main party with a majority of less than 10 per cent — and were thus vulnerable to a 5 per cent swing. Today just 59 Labour and 63 Conservative seats are in that position. Boundary changes may affect the numbers slightly, but not much.

What seems to be happening* is that the social geography of Britain is becoming more polarised: over the past twenty years Labour has generally gained ground in traditional Labour areas — the cities and the north — while the Conservatives have gained ground in suburban and rural areas and the south. More and more once-marginal areas have moved either into the firmly Labour camp (like Newcastle East and Liverpool Toxteth) or firmly Conservative camp (like Bedford and Faversham).

Labour's third problem is that marginal seats now tend to swing less than the national average. On the evidence of the last two elections, new MPs usually manage to retain about 750 votes more than they would expect on national party swings — an effect, perhaps, of the ability of MPs to gain consistent, favourable local publicity (an effect, incidentally, that appears to be independent of party). Before Christmas I reported new findings showing how voting behaviour is becoming less linked to class factors: one possibility is that candidates now matter a little more, with the known incumbent having a small but useful advantage over his or her generally unknown challenger.

If this pattern holds, then a national swing to Labour next time might be more modest in Conservative marginals, with the new MPs of 1979 holding on to a few extra, decisive votes.

Taking the decline of the marginals together with the differences in swing, the size of Labour's task becomes daunting. In the 1950s and 1960s a one per cent swing in the national vote caused 18 to 20 seats to change hands. On the basis of the last two general elections, it needs a two per cent swing to shift that many seats. That is why it is likely to take a swing of 6½ to 7 per cent in the national vote for Labour to win enough marginals to have the 321 seats it will need in the next Parliament.

*See Appendix 2 of *The British General Election of 1979* by David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, published by Macmillan.

principles, such a 'bridging loan' borrowing strategy need not be inflationary.

As it is, the Government is squeezing public services and allowing unemployment to rise. By 1983 it will discover that — hey presto — the money is there for whopping tax cuts. It will fight the next election saying: 'We were the government that brought inflation and taxes down, and now unemployment is starting to fall. See — monetarism works.'

Don't say you haven't been warned.

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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Royal Commission Report

HARRIET HARMAN of NCCL reviews the recommendations

THE GREAT IRONY of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure — with its advocacy of increased powers of arrest and detention — is that it was set up because of public disquiet over a major miscarriage of justice caused by false 'confessions' extracted after confinement inside a police station.

In 1972 three youths 'confessed' to the murder of Maxwell Confait, as a result of which they spent three years in prison for a crime they did not commit. An official inquiry led by Sir Henry Fisher revealed the rights of suspects under police interrogation to be 'a dead letter': there being no sanction for breach of the Judges' Rules, they are simply ignored by the police. Fisher stressed that 'the sanction (for ignoring suspects' rights) ought to be certain and regularly applied. At the moment it is neither. . .'

Against this background, it is almost incredible that the Royal Commission should suggest that regulation of interrogation should be left — to the police themselves. And, while the new powers which the police are to receive are spelt out in uncompromising detail, the nature of any compensating obligations remains extremely vague.

Under the Commission's proposals, anyone 'reasonably' suspected of something which *could* be punished by imprisonment will be liable to arrest without warrant, and detention for up to 24 hours (though a senior officer is expected to review the situation six hours after an arrest).

At present such powers of arrest are generally speaking limited to allegations which might justify a jail term of five years or more, and those accused of lesser offences have been brought to court by summons. Traditionally, it has been argued that even a temporary deprivation of liberty is an extremely serious matter in itself: the Commission's lack of patience with such arguments is shown by their further proposal that arrest without warrant ought to be possible sometimes even if the suspected offence is punishable only by a fine. This, it is claimed, is necessary in order to deal with suspects who refuse to identify themselves: but given the extreme difficulty of defining 'reasonable' suspicion, it represents a remarkable extension in the classes of behaviour which expose citizens to loss of liberty.

STILL MORE REMARKABLE is the Commission's trust that extended powers of arrest will be used more sparingly than those already existing (1.4 million people were arrested in 1979). This is based on the proposition that the police will operate a five-fold 'necessity' rule. Is an arrest necessary because of: refusal of identification; need to prevent repetition or continuation of an offence; need to protect an arrested person or others; need to obtain or preserve evidence; or risk of non-appearance at trial? Some policemen, no doubt, will operate the rule scrupulously. But the majority who wish arrest to be their own right or convenience will find little difficulty in fitting any likely case into one or other of the headings of 'necessity'.

Arrested persons not suspected of 'grave' offences will have to be charged or discharged

within 24 hours. But where a 'grave' offence is suspected, then the police will be able to obtain an indefinite number of 24-hour extensions, provided that they can give reasons which a magistrate in private hearings is willing to accept. 'Graveness' does not seem to be clearly defined, but it goes beyond terrorism, murder and armed robbery, to include sexual offences, corruption and blackmail.

The result of such provisions must be to expose a wide variety of suspects to long and gruelling interrogations as a matter of confident routine. (At present there is no set limit to confinement without charge, but in theory at least a writ of habeas corpus can challenge it at any moment as being unlawful.) And in many cases, legal advice will not be available: it is typical of the Commission's style that there should be a ringing affirmation of the right of suspects to legal advice, followed by a qualification which says that in serious cases the police should be able to bar access to a lawyer if they believe that to allow it might imperil the

cost, and the unhappy acoustics of the average police station, would probably prevent rapid and widespread introduction of the practice (already pioneered in Sweden and America).

However, it is on the question of enforcement of 'the rules that we have proposed' (or rather, not proposed in any meaningful detail) that the Commission's ambivalence, not to say cowardice, becomes most clearly visible. First, the rules, once decided, should be made statutory, as part of subordinate legislation. But the Commission then blandly sets aside half a century of experience — reinforced by Sir Henry Fisher's report — which shows that suspects' rights are merely ignored when not externally enforceable. There should be no rule excluding confessions which have been improperly obtained from employment in a prosecution, and

The duty to see that these rules are obeyed should rest in the first instance where it does now, with the police service itself . . . Breach of the rules should be regarded as being a breach of the police disciplinary code.

Other than that, police abuse of their new powers of arrest and detention will expose them to nothing more than the risk of a civil action long after the event. The Commission more or less admits that for most suspects who fall into police hands the cost and complexity of any such remedy is likely to be prohibitive.



Chris Price MP (second left) and the three unjustly imprisoned for the Confait murder.

investigation of suspected crimes.

Time and again, after long hours detained in a police station, suspects 'confess' to crimes they have not committed — and are then convicted on that evidence alone. Especially this applies to people who are poorly educated, inexperienced, or mentally subnormal. Yet the Commission's only suggestion for guarding against the risk of undue pressure on suspects is that there should be a 'code of practice for the regulation of interviews' — the nature of which is left quite vague:

We do not propose spelling out in detail what its provisions should be, but we recommend that it should deal with the following matters: the right of access to legal advice, special treatment of juveniles and others, the modes of note-taking, the taking of statements and the use of tape-recorders and the giving of cautions, all of which we have already discussed.

The extraordinary 'discussion' of legal advice I have already noted. But the Commission's treatment of other topics can be just as unilluminating. For instance, employment of tape-recorders during interrogation is recommended in general terms. But it is then discovered that

IN SIDELONG MANNER, the Commission also admits that public confidence in the internal disciplinary procedures of the police — their one trusty safeguard against abuses — is something less than absolute. But this is dealt with simply by shuffling the responsibility aside.

We are aware that there have been criticisms of the present arrangements for investigation using the Police Complaints Board . . . We ourselves attach great importance to the complaints system having credibility with the public, and we therefore welcome the Government's response to the (Complaints Board's) proposal . . . for the most serious complaints involving unexplained injuries to be investigated by a specialist body of investigating officers . . .

No suggestion that the implementation of new powers of arrest, detention and interrogation should be conditional upon strengthening of the Complaints Board's powers.

THE REPORT OFFERS one or two good proposals, such as making policemen record their reasons for any arrest. But they are of little value without certain and effective sanctions.

The central absurdity of the Report is its agonising over the supposed 'balance' between the rights of suspects and the right of the community to have criminals brought to justice. No such conflict exists. If a suspect makes a false confession, the individual suffers unfair punishment, and society loses, as in the Confair case, because the true offender goes free.

The Commission's essential justification for new powers relies upon unfocused assertions about the rise in crime of all kinds, from terrorism to computer fraud. No attempt is made to show that greater police freedom to arrest and detain will actually increase the accuracy and efficiency of detection and prosecution. If enacted, the proposal will make general and permanent the sort of powers which the police

were given — allegedly on a temporary basis — under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

At least, the report fails to be unanimous, and its text is punctuated by flashes of common sense from two dissidents — Jack Jones, and the Rev. Wilfred Woods. 'Two of us' don't think powers of arrest should be widened, don't think 10-year-olds should be fingerprinted, and consider that evidence wrongfully obtained should be excluded from prosecution. 'Two of us', it seems, have read the Fisher Report, and correctly state that implementation of the Commission's proposals will merely damage relationships between the police and public, and produce yet more wrongful convictions. This provides some hope that the immediate triumph of the 'law-&-order' lobby may yet be reversed.

in as many weeks, once for three days over job flexibility, often late at night without warning and without transport home. Partly the lay-offs were because of a lack of seats, partly because it saved Leyland money. They found that if the smaller sections had little to do they could take over the trim workers' jobs. The trim workers felt this was an abuse of the new working practices document: one of them calculated that he lost £800 a year more than those working in the finishing section as a result of lay-offs. One of the trim section's demands has been a return to the '6a agreement' which gave workers warning of lay-offs and a guarantee that no lay-offs would occur after ten at night.

While the steward's delegation was at the works committee the remaining stewards had to physically restrain those being laid off from damaging the Metros. One of the subsequently sacked stewards — Taffy John — again warned Moynihan that there would be trouble. He replied: 'I'm sure we can rely on your sound skills to keep things under control.'

Faced with an angry group of workers the stewards accepted a demand that there should be a picket of the gate over the management's inept handling of the affair. The picket was mounted. But about 350 of the 800 workers in the section also marched through the factory from section to section stating their demands. (This particular means of direct confrontation has a long tradition at Longbridge, stretching back to 1956 when there was a full-scale riot.)

The five hour march of 21 November took in an angry and occasionally abusive meeting with the union works committee and a row with a plant manager, Stan Mullet, before going back to those still working in the trim and Allegro section. Those on the march to whom we have spoken stress the restraining role played by stewards who repeatedly stood on boxes or any makeshift podium they could find to advocate an orderly and non-violent demonstration.

Although damage was undoubtedly done, at first the management played this down. Only after the weekend — when the dispute continued for a further five shifts — did they decide to search out the ringleaders. One of these was charged specifically with, among other things, breaking a door window and pulling down curtains; in fact he was playing dominos with a foreman at the time. The foreman — Jeff Cook — who spoke up in his defence has subsequently been hauled into the management offices and asked if he 'is an Edwardes or Adams man'. (Jack Adams is the works convenor who replaced Derek Robinson).

The stewards — many of whom had taken issue with Mullet's attempts to blame the seat builders — face vaguer charges of incitement, calling unofficial meetings outside their section and of intimidating security officers. Some are charged with being in the area when a wrench was thrown into the production line; but not with throwing the wrench. Some of the stewards, anchor men of the trim section, have long been critical of Edwardes but few are politically militant.

Naturally, the stewards appealed against their sacking, gathering statements showing that they had been elsewhere or not involved in inciting industrial sabotage. The appeals were heard by the same people who had decided on the sackings in the first place, joined on this occasion by Mullet. Attempts to speed up or slow down hearings were apparently determined by the relative militancy of the shift about to start work. No cross-examination was allowed of the 40 management prosecution witnesses.

BRITISH LEYLAND

The guilty men

PATRICK WINTOUR on the causes of the Longbridge strike

WHO AND WHAT was responsible for 'the riot' at BL's Longbridge plant on 21 November which led to the sacking of eight shop stewards? And why have 1500 workers in the plant come out on strike in defence of those sacked, putting in jeopardy the whole of the production of the Allegro, the Mini and the Metro? We have spoken to Longbridge production workers who were also eye-witnesses to the demonstration and to BL itself and there appear to be two fundamental causes of the dispute: the excessively authoritarian style of management in BL and the company's arbitrary behaviour in the subsequent inquiry which led to individuals being selected, in the management's words, as ringleaders of an 'unruly mob'.

First, the management style. Part of the 1979 wage deal imposed on BL workers — in the face of union opposition — was a new set of working practices, described in a 92 page document. Within the last few months — and particularly with the introduction of the Metro — the BL management have made a concerted effort to introduce these new arrangements, which substantially reduced the right of the shop-steward to be consulted on a range of issues of concern to shopfloor workers — such as manning levels and the hourly allocation of jobs.

Some of the document's flavour can be gauged by the fact that assembly workers on the Metro now have to raise their hand if they want to go to the lavatory and are then stop-watched for the length of time they take. The specific cause of the 21 November demonstration was the management's refusal to consult with the shop-stewards over repeated lay-offs in the trim area, which were costing workers up to £12 a shift each. Repeated warnings from the stewards about anger over this issue to two industrial relations executives in the plant — Clive Barley and Bernard Moynihan — were ignored.

Equally serious was the company's response to the 'riot' — in which management acted as judge and jury. More of this and the riot itself, shortly, but for the moment it is worth stressing the strength of support for the strikers' case. At first, the workers on the shift after the demonstration refused to support the stewards. But when after two weeks the management rejected appeals against the sackings, both shifts came out on strike: the intervening period gave the unions the opportunity to make the sacked

workers' case on the shopfloor. The scene is now set for a showdown: BL intend to sack any workers still on strike when the factory opens after the holiday, replacing them with other BL employees.

MEN WERE BEING laid off in the trim plant because of a shortage of seats for the Metro. The reason for this was a dispute over productivity in the seat-build plant at Trentham. The workers in this plant cannot be described as traditional militants — largely workers transferred from the Kings Norton factory unfamiliar to the job, they were notable for their antagonism towards Derek Robinson, the sacked Longbridge convenor. Testing out the use of the 92 page document the BL management want Trentham workers to produce 25 seats an hour; the stewards say that the maximum possible is 22 and the company have refused any scientific measurement of the job. On 12 November two men were sacked for low productivity — without the written warning laid down in the company's disciplinary procedure; both men have now been reinstated.

The management claims the lack of seats was destroying the Metro but would not use more than 58 of the 90 jigs available to build seats, because this would have involved backing down over their manning demands. Instead, they started buying seats from an outside supplier which, it was claimed, could easily meet the productivity targets. But subsequently this company too — Callow and Maddox — had a dispute over failure to meet targets.

By the middle of November 6,000 Metros were parked around the plant without seats and the management decided to outsource all this backlog. The national officials of the trades unions had agreed only to some outsourcing, so when the seats started arriving on Thursday afternoon 20 November, first the section store-room — who were unloading the seats — and then the seat-makers at Trentham came out on strike. Before 9 a.m. on Friday the management told Brian Chambers, of the works committee, that he had six minutes to get the Trentham workers back on the job or the plant would be laid off. As a result the Metro lines were laid off and some of the steward from trim went down to the works committee to find out why.

The trim workers had been laid off four times

Reagan's first crisis

El Salvador is on the verge of civil war. The recently united guerrilla movement has begun its long-awaited general offensive to overthrow the US-backed government of Napoleon Duarte, before Ronald Reagan has the chance to increase support for the junta. Meanwhile a 'Democratic Revolutionary Government' is lobbying for support at the United Nations. This report is from a special correspondent who has just returned from El Salvador.

IN A COUNTRY the size of Wales, with a population of four million, it is hard to escape from the sight, the smell and the tragedy of death. 'A large section of the Salvadorean population is being systematically exterminated', writes a Catholic priest, trying to draw the world's attention to the slaughter of more than 12,000 defenceless civilians in 1980. To get an idea of the scale of the slaughter, this is equivalent to about 160,000 deaths in a country with a population the size of Britain's.

We arrived at San Salvador's airport on 2 December, the same evening that two American nuns flew in from Managua. Anxious to beat the unofficial 8 p.m. curfew, we drove fast along the old mountain road to the capital. The armed forces describe this road as 'unsafe' because of the guerrilla activity in the area, but we saw no guerrillas and arrived safely.

The American nuns did not. Ita Ford and Maura Clark were picked up by two friends at the airport and set off along the officially 'safe' coast road. They were stopped at a military check-point, questioned and waved on. The four women were never seen alive again; thirty-six hours later, their bodies were found in make-shift graves by the roadside.

These murders — committed by the Salvadorean military — received enormous international publicity because the victims were citizens of the country which is the mainstay of the civilian-military junta and because a pile of foreign journalists were in town covering the funeral of six opposition leaders murdered the previous week. By and large, however, the daily attrition against the Salvadorean civilian population by the military, and their para-military support groups, has gone unreported.

The nuns bore daily witness to that slaughter. They worked in Chalatenango, in the foothills of the mountains on the border with Honduras, an hour's drive from the capital. It is one of the fiercest arenas of the war between the guerrillas and the armed forces. The military maintains its foothold in the area from the fortress-like barracks in the town's main square, next to the church. The guerrillas control much of the countryside. Ita and Maura's work with the landless, under-nourished peasants inevitably brought them into conflict with the authorities, whose aim has been to eliminate the guerrillas' supporters and cow the rest of the civilian population into silent submission. The nuns' job was to give help where it was needed and to restore human dignity where none had existed before. They had received many death threats from 'Orden', a right-wing para-military group among the peasants. They continued their work in the full knowledge that one day they too would be killed.

Even their funeral was not free from the terror. A dozen military trucks were parked on the

church steps, blocking the main entrance. Local people were told not to attend — only a few old men, women and children dared to defy military opprobrium.

The nuns and priests who had come from all over Central America to pay tribute to Ita and Maura's bravery and dedication hurried back to the capital after the funeral service, shepherded by the Salvadorean Archbishop, Msgr. Rivera y Damas. Since the murder of his predecessor, Archbishop Oscar Romero, and the massacre at his funeral in March, the Church is aware that it is not immune from the generalized repression.



Mourners at the funeral of six opposition leaders last month.

THE UNITED STATES Government has tried to project the image of a well-meaning, reformist Junta caught in the cross-fire between Left and Right in an orgy of violence it is helpless to control. It goes on supporting this Junta, mindless of the atrocities committed by its armed forces, because it does not want another Nicaragua in Central America, and cannot think of an alternative that is feasible in the transitional period. What President Reagan's administration will decide to do is as yet an imponderable, but El Salvador will rank with Iran as the first item on his foreign policy agenda.

The Carter administration, anxious to clean up the human rights image of Latin America, played a major role in the politics of El Salvador. It was closely involved in the overthrow of General Carlos Humberto Romero, who had come to power through fraudulent elections two years before.

The new Government which consisted of progressive army officers and civilian politi-

cians (including socialists and communists), promised to end the violence and corruption. The armed forces pledged that 'Orden' would be dissolved and any other groups which violated human rights would be opposed; political parties of all complexions would be allowed to operate; an amnesty was declared for political prisoners (those that survived the massacre precipitated by the coup) and those in exile; free elections were to be held within a reasonable period.

Most political parties enthusiastically supported the new Junta's plan for agrarian and fiscal reforms in the interim period until elections could be held. Their enthusiasm was short-lived. Three months later, with the violence unchecked and all attempts at reform blocked by the economic elite (dubbed the 'fourteen families') and their allies within the military, the civilians in the Junta resigned. They were replaced by men from the Christian Democratic Party. The violence escalated. In the first four months of 1980, more civilians were assassinated than during the whole of 1979. The Christian Democratic Party split and more resignations occurred.

The ruling Christian Democratic Party now consists of a rump of eight men. Headed by President Napoleon Duarte, they continue to mouth revolutionary-sounding slogans; but their supporters have deserted them. Their meagre achievements have failed to neutralize popular support for the guerrillas. Despite the United States' annual \$25 million of aid Duarte and the others either do not want or are unable to deliver the goods.

Their policy of 'lukewarm reform with repression' has merely served to polarize the situation. A centrist solution to the crisis is no longer possible. 'Free elections within a reasonable period' are recognized by all as a pipe-dream: most political parties and trade unions have thrown in their lot with the revolutionary left.

THE STRENGTH OF the guerrilla movement has always lain in the popular support that it enjoys from the two principal political organizations of the Left — the Bloque Popular Revolucionario and the Frente de Accion Popular Unida. These two groups, which have been gradually built up during the 1970s, can now call themselves mass movements.

In the past the guerrillas have been weakened by the internal divisions between the various political groups. But today old wounds have apparently been healed with the amalgamation of the guerrilla movement into the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front, under a single unified command. Similarly, the political organizations of the revolutionary left are now united in the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas, launched with a demonstration of 200,000 people last January.

In the course of the past year the opposition movement has been able to further broaden its support. In April a Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) was formed. Its component organizations encompass not just the revolutionary left, but also the social democratic MNR, the breakaway Christian Democrats and substantial sectors of the middle class, embraced by the Independent Movement of Professionals and Technicians.

Political activity is no longer possible without armed backing, as was proved a month ago when the six FDR leaders were kidnapped from their unguarded public meeting and murdered. Mass demonstrations like the one last January are no longer possible. The FDR leaders were buried in the presence of a mere 2,000 people.

Jenny Rathbone

Many of them were teenagers wild enough to risk their lives for a political gesture. The atmosphere was one of tense desperation, not solemn mourning. A car backfiring was enough to make everyone run for cover.

The guerillas have for months promised a general uprising by 20 January, as the US administration which takes office then is likely to be more ruthless and less choosy about reformist facades. The general insurrection on the brink of which El Salvador now seems placed, will be bloody but for the great mass of the Salvadorean people it must appear as the only option to the continuing regime and its big cost in human life.

IRELAND

Bad faith at H Block?

MARY HOLLAND on the failure to meet prisoners' demands

SEVEN DAYS before Christmas the settlement of the H Block prisoners' hunger strike, without loss of life, seemed a victory for political sense and humanity. By stressing that it was not prepared to give the prisoners 'political status' the government was able to stand firm on the central issue of principle, while at the same time emphasising that it would go to almost any lengths to be as generous as possible on humanitarian grounds.

By the time the hunger strike ended the prisoners were able to claim that they had won considerable concessions on their five demands relating to their lives inside jail. In the run-up to Christmas both sides seemed well satisfied. There were confident predictions that once the hunger strike was over it was only a matter of days until all the Republican prisoners on the 'dirty protest', who had been refusing to wear prison clothes or use toilet facilities, would also agree to end their protest. Now, eleven days later, one prison officer has been murdered, another is critically ill and 450 prisoners are still on the dirty protest. The euphoria of Christmas week has been replaced by accusations of bad faith and/or stubbornness.

It was possibly inevitable that there should have been differing interpretations of what was on offer to the prisoners on two of their most important demands — to be allowed to wear their own clothes and to do no prison work. At the time that the hunger strikers' condition had become serious, government spokesmen appeared to be signalling frantically that they were prepared to be extremely generous on both issues. Prisoners would be allowed to wear their own clothes for up to three-quarters of each day including, crucially, when they saw visitors. This had not previously been allowed. For the remaining period they would have to wear 'civilian-type clothing' issued by the prison, but a range of clothes would be brought in for them to see and approve. On the work issue the compromise on offer seemed, if anything, more in the prisoners' favour.

What seems to have happened since is that all the grey areas where compromise was optimistically forecast are now reverting to black and white. Just how this can happen may be gauged from the difficulties involved in the procedure of bringing the protest to an end. On 19 December Mr Atkins said that with the ending of the hunger strike the prisoners would be moved into clean cells and given their own clothes. It was understood that they would come off the protest and conform to prison rules. Now, according to relatives of some prisoners who have asked to be moved to clean cells, they have been told that they must agree to accept prison clothing and to conform to the rules before they are moved and allowed to wear their own clothing.

TRANSPORT

Lorries jugger-up

In December the Armitage enquiry into road freight recommended — to the glee of the road haulage industry — that the maximum lorry weight allowed on British roads should be raised from 32.5 tonnes to 44 tonnes. Here MICK HAMER analyses a report riddled with factual inaccuracies, questionable interpretations and internal inconsistencies.

ON THE MORNING of 9 December 1980 Sir Arthur Armitage produced his report recommending that the maximum lorry weight be raised by over a third from 32.5 tonnes to 44 tonnes. In the evening, as it happened, the road lobby was able to celebrate at a dinner marking the 25th anniversary of the Roads Campaign Council — the parliamentary front of the British Road Federation. The BRF had expressed itself pleased that the Armitage report had supported all its arguments; the Freight Transport Association had described it as a '£500 million tonic for industry'. To cope with the heavier lorries Armitage had suggested a large increase in the road building programme. Appropriate, then, that the guest of honour at that evening's dinner should be Tory transport minister Norman Fowler, who used the occasion to announce that he had just let a £20 million contract for five miles of the M25.

In addition to its two major recommendations of heavier lorries and more roads, the Armitage report has a number of environmental sops. These fall into three categories: those which are meaningless, those which relax existing or proposed controls and those which require extra public expenditure.

Among the meaningless is the recommendation that lorries should carry a plaque with their

gross weight on it, to help enforcement of lorry bans. At the press conference to launch his report, Armitage seemed to suggest that the plaque would be permanent. But a 44 tonne lorry could legally use a road with a 24 tonne weight restriction, provided it was empty or not loaded above 24 tonnes. But if Armitage intends to rely on drivers to change the plaque it is difficult to see how this could improve enforcement, especially as he does not recommend an increase in the Department of Transport's enforcement *staff*, although he does recommend an increasing *effort* on enforcement.

Or, again, on lorry noise. Here Armitage recommends tougher restrictions. But he does not want quieter lorries (of 80 decibels) until 1990. This is five years later than the EEC proposal for quieter lorries and because the recommendation would only affect new lorries there could not be any significant effect on traffic noise until the middle 1990s.

Armitage also recommends an increase in the grant — from 50 to 80 per cent — paid to industry for the installation of a private railway siding. He also recommends similar grants for water transport. Together these should help keep freight off the roads, except that no-one in the Department of Transport believes that there will be large increases in transport spending.

ARMITAGE'S PROPOSAL to establish Lorry Action Areas — by analogy with Housing Action Areas — provides a splendid example of the pathetic nature of his environmental recommendations. Armitage proposes that government grants should be given to local authorities to treat areas that are badly affected by lorry traffic. The money would be used to repair buildings that lorries run into, erect bollards to

Contd on p.14

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE NCCL?

At the end of last year, the Home Office succeeded in its contempt case against NCCL's legal officer, Harriet Harman. Her 'crime'? Showing a journalist Home Office documents which had been read out in open court.

NCCL is taking the case to the Court of Appeal in a few weeks. If necessary, we will go to the European Human Rights Commission to defend the openness of court proceedings and journalists' freedom to report them.

But NCCL has to underwrite the costs of the appeal. We urgently need donations for our Contempt of Court Appeal Fund.

NCCL keeps the Home Office on the run. We defend black people against passport raids. We helped stop the Home Office cutting off the citizen's right to complain to the Human Rights Commission. We uphold women's rights against discriminatory laws.

You can join the fight to defend civil liberties by joining NCCL. Annual subscription £7.50 single, £10.00 couple.

**National Council for Civil Liberties
(Room 5), 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1**

The nature of man-talk

Language is one of the most powerful weapons available to man. ANNA COOTE investigates the politics of conversation, grammar and journalism — with special reference to the *New Statesman*.

THREE COLLEAGUES sit down to lunch. As usual when the three are together, they spin conversation easily, evenly between them. A fourth joins them, and chips in with a few words. The thread breaks. Attention is turned to the newcomer, a question asked. The newcomer answers. Another question; this time a longer reply. . . and for the rest of the meal it is the fourth colleague who takes command. The others listen, question, comment, add and listen some more.

Is the fourth colleague a smarter, wittier person? Much older perhaps? Or someone who has more important things to say? Indeed, no. The main difference is that he is male and the other three are female. I know because I was there — an apparently helpless collaborator, programmed from an early age to act like a lady. And I would guess that as mixed-sex conversations go, it was just about average in the balance of male and female contributions.

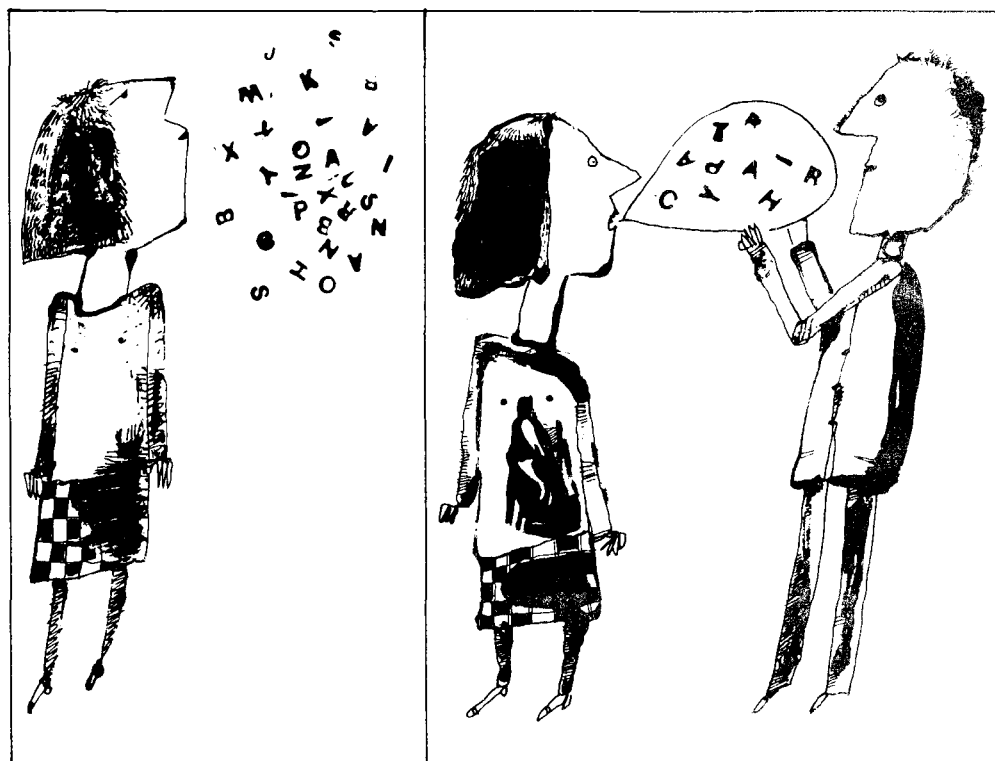
Dale Spender describes in her book *Man Made Language** how females 'abdicate . . . their own opportunities for expression, by deferring to male interests and definitions, and by concentrating on supporting male efforts'. Not that men sit idly by: they expect it, encourage it and get quite upset when it doesn't work out that way. Spender quotes a study by Don Zimmerman and Candace West, who found that 98 per cent of interruptions in mixed-sex conversation were made by males; and she describes how one woman conducted her own experiment in 'non-collaboration':

I've tried it out on a few occasions and the result is always the same. When a man interrupts me on about five occasions, when there have been five times that he has prevented me from finishing what I want to say, I think that's about enough. So then I stop paying attention to him. He is only interrupting *me* so *he* can talk, so I make myself 'unavailable' as his audience. And men don't like it. They think I am being rude. But they are being rude when they interrupt me in the first place.

Women, we are often told, talk too much. We chatter, nag, gossip and go on about things. But Dale Spender can show, after measuring many hours of taped conversation, that the very reverse is true. Men talk *one hell of a lot more* than women. Most of the time, women can't get a word in edgeways. We are muted, not only in conversation, but wherever language is used (except, of course, exclusively among women). The political implications are considerable. By controlling our use of words men 'end up defining what is talked about and which aspects of reality are the most important'. To cite just one example, the experience of most women in the trade union movement would bear this out.

MEN HAVE ENSURED that the notion of their predominance is deeply embedded in our language. As Dale Spender points out, our rules of grammar are not based on any consensus of female and male opinion, but on the dictates of individual men. In 1593, Mr Thomas Wilson declared, for the first time on record, that it was more *natural* to place the man before the woman — as in 'husband and wife' and 'sons and daughters'. In 1746, Mr John Kirkby formulated his 'Eighty Eight Grammatical Rules', of which Rule Twenty One stated that the male gender was more *comprehensive* than the female. Where did he get that idea from? He must have believed, says Spender,

that each man represented much more than each woman and that it was legitimate to encode this personal belief in the structure of the language. . . He handed down Rule Twenty One to a male world of grammarians who were not averse to sharing his assumptions.



Christine Roche

Later, the grammarians of the 19th century decreed that the common usage of 'they' as a singular, sex-indeterminate pronoun was incorrect. In 1805 a new Act of Parliament insisted that the word 'he' stood for 'she'.

Now that we have absorbed these rules as a form of objective truth, it can be extremely difficult to write non-sexist, grammatical prose. Most writers insist that it is needless to try, since 'he' and 'his' are *correct*. But does the male form really embrace the female? Dale Spender cites a wealth of empirical research to prove that it most certainly does not. A 1973 study, for example, found that young children thought that *man* meant male people in sentences such as 'man needs food'; and another study in 1975 established that science students thought male when discussing 'the evolution of man'. What is 'correct' about projecting a version of reality which obliterates half the human race?

HAVING TAKEN CARE to construct a language in their own image, men have used it to promote their view of the world as *the* view, by controlling every point at which language is recorded and disseminated. Our news media provide a useful illustration of this point — one which has preoccupied me increasingly since joining the *New Statesman*. If we at Great Turnstile, with our good intentions, can't get it right, what hope for the rest?

To be sure, there is a sincere commitment among *NS* journalists to give space to 'women's issues', to encourage women to contribute and to root out sexist references from texts and headlines. Yet it seems to me that the *New Statesman* remains incorrigibly masculine. It isn't just the name (we'd welcome alternative suggestions), nor even the predominance of male writers (*nine* out of 11 full-timers) — although one need only imagine a reversal (the 'New Stateswoman' with nine female writers!) to get an idea of how strong these characteristics are. There is, in addition, a general climate of maleness which seeps like a fog into every nook and cranny of the institution. How is it constituted, this atmosphere? What are its component parts?

I was prompted by Dale Spender's work to log one of our weekly editorial conferences. It

was a fairly average meeting, though briefer than most. Altogether, eight people spoke (discounting a few interventions of less than 10 seconds): four were female and four male. Their contributions were undoubtedly of equal value, with equal numbers of women and men talking about their equally important work on the following week's issue. The women spoke for a total of eight minutes, the men for 33. I can remember very few conferences where the score has been more even.

So that may be one way in which the masculinity of the *New Statesman* is shaped and preserved. Women have learned to choose their words more carefully, to be brief and to the point, but skills such as these do not provide an adequate counter-balance. By talking more, men determine more often the subjects that are worthy of attention, and set the mood in which decisions are taken. Women, by their relative silence, seem to concur — unable to break the

habit of a lifetime.

We concur in decisions about what is a 'good story' and what is not, what is central and what is peripheral, what is 'hard' news and what is 'soft'. And in this the *NS* subscribes, by and large, to the traditional values of Fleet Street: not its political values, but its news values — all the bumps and dents and irregularities in the funny mirror it holds up to the world.

These have been developed, of course, by white, middle-class men, generation upon generation of them, forming opinions, imposing them, learning them and passing them on as Holy Writ. We have inherited a *hierarchy* of news values. What are the major stories of the day? The economy . . . industry . . . politics (of Whitehall and Westminster) . . . foreign affairs . . . and so on, down the scale. A 'hard' story is generally deemed to be one based on facts, on something precise which has happened, in a particular sphere already labelled 'Important'. A story based on description, individual experience, nuance — a 'human interest' story, perhaps, or something which has happened in a sphere *not* labelled 'Important' — may be considered 'good', but is nevertheless 'soft' or 'offbeat'. Why? Where did these ideas come from? Are they objective, universal, or simply man-made?

Of course, they are useful guidelines. It is essential to give people information about things which affect their present and future lives. At the *New Statesman*, they are followed neither too rigidly nor at all slackly, and so we are saved from that other incorrigibly masculine style of journalism: the elegant posturing of the essayist, the comfortable club-room art of rolling witty words and big, fat opinions down one's nose at the world, week after week. In my partisan view, the *New Statesman* does a job well, uniquely combining a left perspective with the keenest instincts of a Fleet Street newsroom. Yet the very pursuit of this goal helps to preserve its distinctly masculine flavour.

For here we are, up to our necks in a culture which has no experience — and therefore no means — of describing and accounting for the world as women know it. Women were not around when the first newshounds put their feet into the first doors, or when the first editor spiked the first 'soft' story, or when the first Sports Page was launched. As the years passed, a few females crept in, their numbers swelling with the introduction of the first 'Women's Pages'. But they have never set the pace, nor imprinted their character on the newspaper industry. They have never had a chance to challenge the dominant view of what matters, or develop a tradition of journalism which takes women *as seriously as men* and consistently interprets events through their eyes. (Women's pages are improving, and need to be defended, since they ensure that women are not left out altogether; but they are nevertheless based on a traditional male view of what women are and what they want to read.)

WE FEMALES have learned to read and write journalism as a second language, not our mother tongue. Most of us readily accept it as the norm and imagine no alternative. But as Dale Spender explains, this is just one of countless ways in which women have been silenced, and thereby denied the opportunity to generate their own meanings.

Both sexes have the capacity to generate meanings but women have not been in a position to have their meanings taken up and incorporated in those of society. They have not been in the public arena, they have not been the 'culture'-makers. . .

Instead, men have supplied all the meanings, and they have been careful not to supply any 'which undermine their power, diminish their prestige, or detract from their image':

Both sexes have inherited these meanings and are required to accept them as the only reality, but they are the product of one sex's view of the world, and its own place within that world. It is to be expected that the partial and single view of reality which has been constructed by one sex is a 'better fit' with their own experience than it would be for the sex whose meanings have been omitted, who have been silenced.

It is necessary to imagine what it would have been like if the first newspaper editors, proprietors and reporters had been female. It is not enough to say 'it couldn't have happened'. What if the world had been ordered in such a way as to make it possible? What news values

would we have now? What would journalism be like? It wouldn't be like *Spare Rib* or *Guardian Women*, because these are efforts to swim against the tide, to compensate. There would be no need for that. And it's not enough to point to this or that individual female writer (the foreign correspondent, the political reporter) and remark that her gender seems to make no difference to her work. She has learnt her trade well — but how differently might she have developed if women, not men, had laid down the rules in the first place? If 'she' stood for 'he' by Act of Parliament? If men sat muted at the dining table while women held forth, as though it were perfectly natural? Only by imagining such an extraordinary state of affairs (no more desirable than the one we know now) can we begin to see how language has been used, in an intricate variety of ways, year after year, layer upon layer, to keep women quiet.

RIGHT of REPLY

MPs are good for you

In November Monica Ferman reported on the ineffectual proceedings of the committee stage of the Housing Bill. Here JACK STRAW, a member of the committee, replies.

LABOUR'S FIRST manifesto — in 1900 — ran to 150 words and one main verb. Staccato headings like 'Nationalisation of Land and Railways' and 'No compulsory vaccination' were all that was thought necessary to inform the electorate of the Party's intention, and its representatives of its directions. The Conservatives' manifesto was scarcely any longer. Headed *The Manifesto of the Marquess of Salisbury* (the Party leader) it contained a page and a half of banalities about the Boer War, and the immortal sentence 'To the difficulties which will occupy a future Government, China will furnish an abundant contribution'. Serious policy, its content and timing, was too important to be left to the electorate, or the parties: in the Burckian tradition of English representative democracy, that was a matter for the priesthood of MPs, offering their industry but never sacrificing their judgment for the opinion of their electors.

But all this has now changed. Parliament is near to becoming that which Burke denied it should ever be, 'a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests'. For we live in the age of the manifesto, documents carefully and elaborately prepared, in which the detail and (hopefully) the relative priority of every policy proposed is spelt out and presented to the electorate, in return for their support at the polls. Failure to implement manifesto commitments is now — and rightly — one of the gravest charges which can be brought against any politician or government, as the debates inside the Labour Party this year, and Sir Geoffrey Howe's present agony of finding himself surrounded by the 'road blocks' of election pledges so graphically illustrate.

But Monica Ferman's analysis (*NS* 21 November) of the work of the Standing Committee on the Housing Bill (of which I was a member) read as if we were back in the days when manifestos mattered little and party allegiances even less. Her expectation seemed to be that the nine opposition members on the Committee should have outvoted the eleven government members, and could have done so if only they had produced better arguments. I am not surprised that she was so sorely disappointed. For her whole article ignored the truth that the contemporary dominance of party and manifesto over Parliament means that governments are not only *able* to get through the major planks of their policy, but are *expected* to do so, if necessary by using the guillotine (as happened with the Housing Bill) to deny the Opposition one of its most effective weapons, that of delay.

But it does not follow from this that the imperatives of the manifesto, or the dominance of Cabinet, or the Civil Service, mean (as the *New Statesman* suggested) that 'elected participants' in the Committee system 'have no real role'. Nor does it follow from this that with reforms to the system, that role could not be greatly strengthened. What does follow is that in a political system characterised by strong parties, the role of committee members, and especially opposition ones, is very different from that which Monica Ferman anticipated.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES and the voting patterns which flow from them, depend not just on what is, but on what is perceived — upon how people feel. The Opposition, in committee or on the floor of the House, can never, by itself, force a change in a government's *policy*: but what it can do is to change the perceptions of that policy, and the political climate in which the policy is pursued. (That incidentally was Margaret Thatcher's supreme achievement in opposition.) Two examples from the work of the Housing Bill Committee may serve to illustrate this process.

First, the sale of council houses. The Government entered the Committee stage in an assertive and aggressive mood on this policy, confident that its promise had won many seats in the Midlands and the South East, and that it would neatly wrong-foot Labour among both owner-occupiers and its stronghold council estates. Not only would the sale of council houses provide 'independence, mobility and security' but the proceeds of sales would 'save public money', and show a 'substantial surplus to the community' (M. Heseltine, 19.4.79).

By the end of the Committee stage, however, Ministers had become strangely reticent on the costs and benefits of sales — our own analysis having shown that it would cost many millions — and the Report stages became a humiliation for Michael Heseltine as even he had to concede that sales of elderly persons' dwellings could have such adverse consequences for the housing of the elderly that they needed to be prevented. Now, so tarnished has the sales pledge become, that Michael Heseltine's last speech contained less than a sentence on it. Council houses will continue to be sold until Labour returns. But they will not now be the vote-winner the Tories once thought.

Second, shorthold tenure. The NEC's Housing Sub-Committee had agreed that we should seek to introduce as many safeguards for tenants as possible into the Tories' scheme, and leave a final decision on any commitment to repeal until the conclusion of the Committee stage. One facility which existing Standing Committee procedure does allow is the close questioning of Ministers. It emerged from this that not only would the Government refuse all the safeguards we proposed (most of which, by the by, had been in earlier Tory backbench bills), but that the scheme would be far worse in operation than even our reading of the Bill had shown. A public commitment to repeal and give security to all shorthold tenants followed — made in the knowledge, which the Government certainly shared, that the promise to give immediate security to all shorthold tenants once we returned to power would, of itself, deter some landlords, maybe many, from embarking down this road.

NONE OF THIS is to argue that the Committee system is a perfect weapon in the hands of the Opposition. It certainly is not. Above all, in Monica Ferman's phrase, the Government 'start with a free kick' by having their civil service advisers with them, while Opposition members have no systematic briefing available to them at all. The formal 'Notes on clauses' produced by the Civil Servants to explain the meaning of clauses (necessary, especially where technical language is used, or where there are frequent references to other enactments) are provided to Oppositions only by the grace and favour of Ministers, and the traditions of departments (it is not one of the Department of Environment's). The lack of back-up inevitably means that Oppositions are forced to rely, often too heavily, on briefing from pressure groups — in the case of the Housing Bill on Shelter, the local authority associations and a myriad of organisations representing tenants' and residents' groups; and that too much time in committee is spent by Opposition members trying to find out what clauses actually mean, rather than illuminating their consequences.

Two reforms could change this and could

quickly be introduced. First, the House should have a rule that notes on clauses should always be made available to the Opposition. Second, the Opposition on major Standing Committees should be provided with funds to appoint their own team of advisers, to brief members, and to sift the representations received from pressure groups.

The reform which would, however, most markedly swing the balance of power towards the Opposition (and recalcitrant Government backbenchers) would be that to enable Bill Committees to take evidence — from Ministers and outside bodies — on the Government's justification for its legislative proposals. This could be done in two ways — either by 'pre-legislation scrutiny' by, for example, the existing Departmental Select Committees, before any Bill was formally introduced; or by changes in the Standing Committee procedure to enable it to take evidence at the Committee stage. The 1978 Procedure Committee favoured the latter course, with a proposal that one-third of the Members of a Standing Committee should be able to insist on at least three investigatory sessions before the clause by clause examination began.

This is a reform which I strongly support, but it would not be without consequences — especially for any incoming Labour government, committed to a vast programme of legislative change. Strengthening Standing Committees could greatly delay the progress of legislation, and would almost certainly mean that the promise of a (much-needed) Industry Bill on the statute book 'within days' of Labour's return to power would be one promise that was not fulfilled.

Meanwhile, in Scotland . . .

Rob Edwards reports

THE END of publicly subsidised housing in Scotland is presaged in a technical change contained in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, given its second reading in the House of Commons last month. By giving the Secretary of State for Scotland power to prevent individual local authorities from receiving a single penny of Housing Support Grant (HSG), the Government is paving the way for the eventual self-financing of council housing — and consequently very high rents and very low levels of new building and improvement. Since the HSG system was introduced in Scotland in 1979 — as a forerunner to the new English and Welsh subsidy system — the proportion of local authorities' income from the grant has declined from 35 per cent to 21 per cent, while the proportion met by rents has risen from 49 per cent to 63 per cent. If the subsidy continues to be reduced at this rate, by 1984 it will have ceased to exist.

Recently the Scottish Office Minister for Home Affairs and the Environment, Mr Malcolm Rifkind, announced a cut of at least £80 million in next year's grant and urged local authorities to raise rents by almost 40 per cent — reminding them that if they didn't comply the Government would slash their housing capital borrowing allocation as well. This latest reduction has even angered some Tory local government stalwarts. Edinburgh's arch-Tory and Chairman of the Housing Committee, Cornelius Waugh — who presides over a house waiting list growing by over a thousand a year yet who is planning not a single new council house in the foreseeable future — has expressed concern over the halving of the city's grant.

EVEN IF I wake up early Saturday and it's dark and the rain's rattling the windows, as long as I've got a game to look forward to the sun's shining' — so says Bill, the *Spread's* backline stalwart. Any player he can't close down, Bill takes out. It's a style of marking which opposing forwards sometimes discover is better solved by a 'right 'ander' than appeals to the referee. Yet Bill's physical approach to the game is always redeemed by a commitment and no mean ability to 'play football'.

Indeed, this is a sentiment to which even the stormtroopers patrolling the midfield pay lip service. The *Spread Eagle* side may honour it more in the breach than the observance but especially when they're winning the favourite shout is 'Play football.' Of course, when they're losing it's: 'Get stuck in.'

This season the *Spread* has become the team to beat in the Stoke Newington and Hackney League. We're riding the top of the second division and in the quarter finals of the cup. You can read about us in the small print of the *Hackney Gazette*.

We play both our home and away matches on Hackney Marshes — the recreational part of the Lea Valley which lies between the reservoirs of Walthamstow and the industrial wastelands of Stratford. Originally, a piece of marginal land, it became a dumping ground after the war for the rubble left behind by the Luftwaffe. Sentiment for the bombed-out East Enders coupled with some socialist councils eventually led to the area being landscaped to provide some sorely needed playing fields. Shallow topsoil over rubble makes for perfect drainage, so games are rarely rained off on the Marshes.

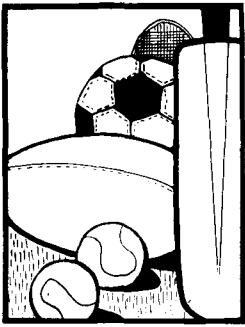
INDEED, the Marshes now carry the biggest concentration of pitches in London and have become the stamping ground for those who just missed the books of East London's professional clubs. On a busy Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning, the hundred or so pitches are ablaze with the different colours and patterns of the teams' strips in this football megamarket.

Bill Shankly, the manager of Liverpool, once put in their proper place those people who regard football as a matter of life and death. He said definitively: 'They're wrong: it's more important than life and death.' I think Shankly would move from Liverpool to Hackney if he saw the Marshes on a good day.

More and more as the season's got into its stride Saturday afternoon has supplanted everything, from women to spelling, as the high-spot of my week. The build up to the match is beginning earlier and earlier in the week and on the actual drive over to the pub for the pre-game meet even Radio 1 sounds good. This Saturday it was a cup match and, as befits the sudden-death nature of this form of competition, there was an extra bite to the atmosphere in the pub.

The *Spread Eagle* is in Homerton High Street about half a mile to the west of the Marshes. Cup tension (and Eddie Grant booming out *Do you feel my Love*) made my first brandy much more like a sensible precaution against the cold than incipient alcoholism. Between the greetings and comments on West Ham's victory over Tottenham, I managed to glean something about our opponents.

'Taverners. They're a lukes' side John,' our manager Mick got in over Eddie Grant. 'They play pretty football but they're well down in the league and shouldn't be too hard to 'ave over.' When I go back to the East End I slip back into



John McVicar

The Big Match on Pitch 60

a vernacular that in my current working circles wouldn't be understood and, if it was, would probably get me blackballed.

'Luke' is rhyming slang for spade, that is, black. The etymology goes: luke for *Lucozade* which is derived, via the rhyme, from spade. Yet, *pace* my intellectual friends, the usage isn't racist — one of our midfield players, George, is as black as the proverbial card.

MICK MANAGES an NCP car park in the Soho where Brian Moore of ITV's *The Big Match* parks his motor. Mick can lay some verbal down, particularly about his team, and someone who works in TV told me that Brian Moore is thinking of offering Mick a contract: he'll screen one of our matches in *The Big Match* in exchange for Mick not bending his ear about the *Spread's* latest victory every time he parks or collects his car.

Mick drove us out of the pub and we all booted down in our respective motors to the North Marsh. At the entrance to the changing rooms a bunch of first-generation West Indians were lounging, haughtily surveying the scene. One or two were a bit lumpy and held me in hard-eye contact just in case I was part of the afternoon's opposition. As we sauntered in I noticed that some of my side had tightened up their walk and set their faces, girding their

macho in the ritual pre-match gamesmanship.

We clustered round Mick who was at the booking office window paying for the pitch. 'Six quid,' he replied to my query. 'Everything's funny money nowadays.' I grinned at the booking clerk who for weeks'd had me believing that he thought I looked like that prisoner they made the film about. 'I bet you get mistaken for him all the time.' I confirmed that it did happen a lot.

As we were changing, Mick was in the back-ground flapping around like a December turkey, trying to locate the ref. Over the Marshes refs take four quid, a constant barrage of abuse and, occasionally, a clump. Managers of the more volatile teams have to keep something in the kitty for times when only 'a drink' for the ref stands between them and expulsion from the league. When 'Mr Brown' appeared, Mick started lapping him up as if he was Brian Moore with *The Big Match* camera crew.

We all drifted out on to pitch 60 — straggling the line was the usual handful of diehard managers and coaches, new girlfriends, out-of-action players and sheepskin-wrapped subs silently praying for an early injury or sending off. It was our turn to supply the corner flags and Roger our car insurance broker had methodically screwed them in. Burdened with more social conscience than most of us, Roger

is one of those maintainers of the institutional infrastructure without whom the rest of us couldn't live.

Somehow or other Roger combines this admirable quality with a brand of sliding tackle that has all the hallmarks of a Kamikaze pilot confined to the mud flats. On a soft pitch Roger can leave a veritable drainage ditch between where he launches himself and his victim lies moaning. The more squeamish members of the Taverners were appealing to the ref, with some great over-the-top expressions of disbelief, after the second of them had been upended by one of Roger's ground to ground missiles. Their heavier soul brothers, though, weren't into outside mediators and were already exchanging significant glances. Mr Brown had seen it all before and didn't even blow harder on his whistle as he routinely, methodically applied the rules.

AFTER three minutes or so I became aware that the play had settled down into a game of football with the physical element blending unobtrusively with the ball skills. There's no Corinthian ethic on the Marshes; teams are out there to win. It's getting so competitive that it won't be long before two sets of arms go up when the ref tosses the coin. Nevertheless, it's not win at any price.

Once the two sides have tested each other's mettle and discovered it not to be wanting, a consensus emerges about not taking liberties. That certainly cools out the physical element. The main dampener, though, is undoubtedly the respect given, however grudgingly it's conceded, to skill. Many of the players have a genuine Shankly-like veneration for the game. And even at the local club level it's amazing how much skill there is to admire.

Unfortunately for the Taverners, ball skills couldn't contain teamsmanship, fitness and the confidence of a winning side — we were three up within 20 minutes and won 6-1. The final whistle: suddenly my world is no longer bound by the four sides of a football pitch. I shook hands with opponents whom I'd nearly come to blows with during the game; took a roll call of my injuries; and felt the icy north wind which sweeps down the Lea Valley freeze my sweaty shirt to my chest. It was time to go home and explain to an uncomprehending woman why we couldn't go out tonight — the right knee was too tacky to do anything but rest on a stool in front of *The Big Match*.

Mick was scuttling round his side dispensing praise like trainers do dabs from the sponge. 'Great game. Said they wouldn't give us too much trouble.' Someone else was trying to find out how West Ham had done. I was more interested in getting out of the wind.

The wire mesh down the middle of the changing room was now a demarcation line not only between the sides but also between victory/defeat and congratulations/commiseration. Yet, if what I thought I caught a whiff of as I left was in the air, defeat wouldn't be stinging for long. The Russians think they've got problems with Poland — wait till those tank crews get back from Afghanistan. There's no unpleasant emotion or ideology in the world that can withstand Afghan Black.

As I filtered through the showerers and boot-stampers in the changing room corridors I picked up that West Ham had won. As I drove off not even the sight of all the tower blocks round the Marshes, poised like giant outriders of the rich ready to stalk down any East Ender trying to make it to Knightsbridge, could make the day go sour.

Hackney Marshes, the biggest collection of pitches in the world.



Associated Newspapers

Transport

Cont'd from p.9

prevent lorries mounting pavements, install double glazing and keep the road surface in good repair. Armitage says:

We regard it as essential that the schemes should be applied only to relatively few areas . . . These areas would be small . . . and central government should be able to control the total amount of resources devoted to lorry action areas.

However, at the moment the government pays a double glazing grant if a new road causes an increase in traffic and noise levels above 68dB. Using this criterion, the Noise Advisory Council in evidence to Armitage estimated that it would cost £1,600 million to double glaze those houses currently suffering from excessive lorry noise. Armitage describes this figure as 'beyond the realms of practicability'. His lorry action area proposals are 'infinitely more modest' — some £6 million a year. At which rate all the worst affected houses should be double glazed by September 2247. As an alternative Armitage suggests increasing the noise threshold above 68dB to reduce the number of people who can get grants.

Armitage's taxation proposals — he recommends increasing the tax on heavy lorries and reducing the tax on light lorries — are related to the road damage which he estimates each lorry causes. He estimates road damage by use of the 'Fourth Power Law.' Following exhaustive tests carried out by the American Association of State Highway Officials it was calculated that the road damage was related to the fourth power of the axle weight. So that — for example — an increase in axle weights from 10 tonnes to 11 tonnes would increase the damage done to roads by almost half. The Fourth Power Law has been criticised as being too low a gearing, some say a fifth or sixth power might be more appropriate. One of the grounds for criticism is that the Fourth Power Law does not apply to weak minor roads. Armitage says that the American tests included weak roads so this criticism isn't valid. However, Armitage seems to be unaware that a number of weak roads broke up during the tests; all these roads were excluded from the calculations from which the Fourth Power Law is derived.

At one stage, Armitage argues that increasing lorry weights will 'slow down greatly the

increase in the mileage of the heaviest lorries that would occur if the maximum weight remained at 32.5 tonnes.' In other words, heavier lorries will stop things getting quite so bad as they might have been. But earlier in the report Armitage writes:

We do not believe that it would be sufficient to aim to reduce the impact of lorries on people and the environment compared to what it might otherwise have been. That would be a reduction only in a special and misleading sense.

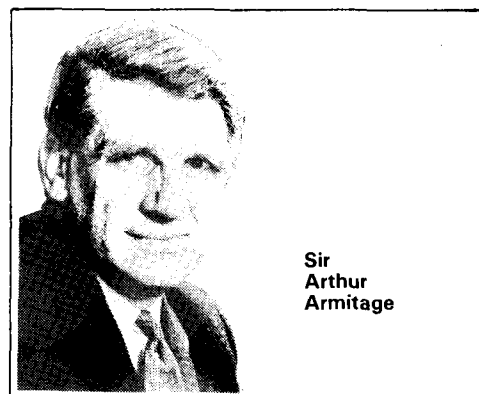
A similar inconsistency emerged at the press conference when Armitage said four times that although he was recommending heavier lorries, they would be no larger than existing lorries. But the report itself recommends an increase in maximum length of just over one and a half feet. In one part of the report he refuses to ban heavy lorries on minor roads, on the grounds that these roads carry so little traffic at present that it is not worthwhile having a ban. Elsewhere, he restricts the size of containers on the grounds that so few containers exceed the standard container that a ban, while having little practical effect at present, will stop larger containers being introduced.

HEAVY LORRIES get involved in more than their fair share of fatal accidents. As Armitage says, one of the reasons why lorries are so lethal is 'the large mass of a lorry' — 'a physical fact about which no practical action can be taken'. Yet he proposes increasing the maximum mass (weight) by 35 per cent.

He believes that heavier lorries have three virtues; they will cut costs, save fuel, and reduce lorry numbers (because heavier lorries can carry more). In doing so he takes on trust the evidence of the road lobby and the Department of Transport — a fine distinction — and ignores a considerable body of evidence which doubts that heavier lorries would bring any benefits.

Last month the former head of the Transport and Road Research Laboratory's environment group gave a paper which said that the weight of goods being carried in the average heavy lorry was declining. His conclusion was to doubt whether a switch to heavier lorries would cut costs. Although similar evidence was given to Armitage he simply ignores it.

A good reason for doubting the conclusion that heavier lorries will save fuel is to be found in the Armitage Report. Armitage found that



Sir
Arthur
Armitage

despite a large increase in the number of heavy lorries — which should have saved fuel if his conclusion is correct — 'fuel productivity (in terms of ton-mile per gallon of derv) was 8 per cent worse in 1977 than 1967'. Armitage fails to explain this trend before ignoring it.

The report also contains good evidence to suggest that its recommendations will actually increase the number of heavy lorries. In his conclusions Armitage writes:

It has been suggested in evidence that allowing heavier lorries might increase lorry traffic through the attraction of business from competing modes, principally the railways. This is not likely to be significant.

But in his analysis of the causes of the growth in road freight he finds that it can be almost as cheap as the railways, noting:

Demand for freight transport has also been heavily influenced by its relatively low price

and

Obviously price must be of some importance in explaining the growth of lorry traffic.

Back in 1978 an article advocating heavier lorries appeared in *The Times*. Bill Rodgers, who was then at transport, scribbled a note to his civil servants saying 'How about an inquiry into heavier lorries?' Two civil servants in the Freight Directorate, under-secretary Joe Peeler and assistant secretary David Lyness, drafted an inquiry proposal which suggested that the inquiry should 'come to a sensible conclusion in line with the Department's view' and 'establish a clear and overwhelming case on balance for heavier lorry weights . . . It should provide a focus for the various road haulage interests to get together, marshall their forces and act cohesively to produce a really good case which should not merely establish the main point at issue but should do good to their now sadly tarnished public image. This would make it easier for the Government to propose legislation (on lorry weights and other matters) in their favour.' They were however worried that the inquiry might produce accusations of 'rigging'.

Peeler and Lyness could scarcely have wished for a better outcome. Poor Peeler got kicked sideways, following the leak of his inquiry proposal, and is now in charge of — among other things — the M25. But Lyness, whose residence in Cosbycote Avenue, SE24 is well away from the juggernaut-blighted main road — Herne Hill — and who was responsible for much of the Department's pro-lorry evidence, must be well pleased with his work.

Back in 1973 the Department of the Environment — when responsible for transport — tried to increase lorry weights. After a free vote the House of Commons rejected the proposal. Fowler has promised another free vote. MPs should vote as before.

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Diary

FRANCIS WHEEN

■ The Wheen heart sank a yard or two last Saturday when I read the results of a survey carried out for Pye on the subject of breakfast television. True, only 44 per cent of the 1,000 people questioned said that they would actually watch it — *only* 44 per cent! — but the real horror lay in the remaining 56 per cent, most of whom said that they wouldn't look at breakfast TV simply because they hadn't enough time, and the rest of whom claimed that they'd be 'too busy getting ready for work' or 'busy getting children ready for school'. Why do people feel that they have to make excuses for absenting themselves from the wretched screen? Am I really the only person who intends to boycott the breakfast show not because I'm brushing kiddies' hair but simply because I don't *want* to watch it?

■ As it happens, I don't possess a TV, so I shan't even have the opportunity of tuning in. Which is just as well, because the nasal whine of David Frost and the snap, crackle and pop of Esther Rantzen would be more than flesh and blood could tolerate shortly after dawn. Frostie, indeed, is not a gent whose mug I care to see at any hour. Since the Vestey revelations caused such an outcry last year, I hope viewers will not forget that Frost, too, is a tax avoidance artist on an impressive scale. In case any readers may wish to emulate him, I hereby offer, free of charge, a guide to how he kept almost £150,000 from the clutches of the Inland Revenue. Take your atlas from the shelf and follow me into the next paragraph.

■ What happened was this. At the start of 1967 Frost suspected that quite a bit of loot might be coming his way from American TV. He wished to avoid British income tax on his overseas earnings while still remaining a UK resident, so his solicitors drew up a partnership agreement between Frost and a Bahamian company and sent it to an obliging firm called the Trust Corporation of Bahamas Ltd, which goes in for this sort of thing. On 8 February 1969 the Pembina Investment Co. Ltd, a 'shell' company held by Trust Corporation, changed its name to Leander Productions Ltd. (Readers with long memories will recall that Leander used to swim the Hellespont every night to see his beloved Hero. He drowned eventually.) On 17 February an indenture of partnership was entered into between Frost and Leander. The partnership's 'business' was to be carried on under the name of Leander Enterprises (I hope you're following all these name changes), and the agreement provided that 99 per cent of the partnership's capital assets should belong to Frost and 1 per cent to the company, and that Frost should be entitled to 95 per cent of the annual 'profits' of the partnership and the company should have the other 5 per cent. The partnership's profits — and income — were, of course, Frost's American earnings.

In March 1969 Leander Enterprises entered into a contract with a company based in Curacao (I hope you've kept the atlas handy), which acquired 'sole and exclusive benefit' of the exploitation of Leander Enterprises' assets; and after that date money from Frost's activities was channelled through these two com-

panies (created on the advice of our old friends, the Trust Corporation). The upshot of all this was that Frost's tax bill for the years 1969-1972 was £27,805 rather than the £174,654 which it would otherwise have been. And it was all perfectly legal. The Inland Revenue was thus £146,849 the poorer, while Frost went on to become The Face That Will Launch A Million Breakfasts.

■ Positively the last word on this breakfast business. Travelling back to London from the Labour Party conference last year, I shared a dining compartment with two people from Thames TV — producers, I think — who were discussing television coverage of current affairs.

'Well,' said the older one, 'this is all tied up with the bias against understanding — you know, the Birt-Jay theory.'

His companion looked puzzled.

'Who's Bert Jay?'

■ There is still no law on privacy, but if there's one thing likely to spur the members of the present government into action it's the thought of other people nosing around their bank statements. So here's an instructive tale. Last summer our contributor Jonathan Coe either lost his chequebook or had it stolen. Last week the police told him that they had recovered it, but said that they needed information about transactions on his account. Coe said he'd be happy to provide the gen, but he would have to call his bank, which happens to be the Post Office's National Girobank. Don't worry, said the police, we'll call them — and we can assure you they won't give us any information without first alerting you.

When Coe visited the police station later he found that his bank had given the officers all the information they needed, without consulting him. He complained to the bank, only to be told that they hadn't thought it necessary to contact him. The next day Coe had another call from the police: 'What's this about you complaining to the bank?' Coe replied that the complaint was purely a matter between him and his bank, and was no business of the police. 'Well that's just as well,' said the officer, 'because they were in the process of sending us copies of your cheques and bank statements.'

■ When one listens to Michael Heseltine or his housing minister, John Stanley, spouting about a moratorium on council house building and simultaneously urging councils to flog their existing stock of homes, it is not always possible to picture what extreme effects the present housing shortage can have on those who have nowhere else to go. I am therefore grateful to the forthcoming issue of Shelter's magazine *Roof* — due out in a couple of weeks — for alerting me to two cases concerning homeless families. One is about a boy called Terence Alexander who died last October, aged eight months, in Northallerton, North Yorkshire. The district council had put Terence's family into a mobile home as 'temporary' accommodation. The family had been there for 18 months when Terence died of pneumonia. A Shelter worker who visited the caravan found considerable evidence of damp.

The other case is from Aldershot, Hants., where 14-month-old Stella Nuth recently died from bronchitis. Stella and her mother, a single parent, had been living in an ex-army barracks since Stella's birth, because the council had nowhere else to put them. A Shelter worker

again found the place damp, and also noted that the high ceilings made the rooms in the barracks very difficult to heat. It is, of course, difficult to prove conclusively that there was a direct link between the deaths of these two children and the housing conditions they endured. It can, however, be said with certainty that they would have had a much better chance if they had had warm, dry homes. It can also be confidently predicted that, with the present dismemberment of council housing, warm and dry homes for people such as Terence Alexander and Stella Nuth are going to be more and more scarce.

■ The week before Christmas is a time when government departments are usually on their worst behaviour, and this year was no exception. While most sensible people were grappling with the Christmas quiz there came lurching out of the Home Office a grubby little number calling itself the Criminal Attempts Bill. This is the bill which abolishes the 'sus' law, but it also creates an entirely novel offence which will be just as bad as the one it's killing off; that is to say, 'interfering with a motor vehicle or trailer in a public place'. Presumably this is supposed to catch characters who are found trying car doors — but if so, why is it being introduced? There are already plenty of ways in which you can deal with people who are preparing to nick a motor vehicle (not to mention a trailer): attempted theft, attempting to take and drive away, attempting to cause criminal damage, and so on. The only possible motive for this new law is to allow police to carry on in much the same way as they have with 'sus', picking up youngsters to whose faces they take a dislike. Or perhaps the Home Office would care to offer another explanation? We'd be delighted to hear it.

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ Mr John Holt, chairman of the West Yorkshire employment and economic development sub-committee, said: 'When we have people coming over from abroad we want to give West Yorkshire not an Arthur Scargill image but a Geoff Boycott image, someone who can go in at a crucial time and score a hundred.' — *The Times* (Charles Trevor)

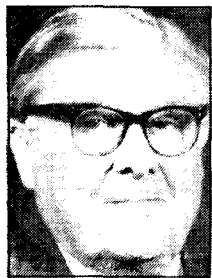
□ Redbridge magistrate Guy Dixon took a dim view when Steven Logie, 19, admitted being drunk in Eastwood Road, South Woodford, where he lives. 'You should be ashamed. That's the street where I was born,' he said. Logie was fined £15. — *Ilford Recorder* (K.Bell)

□ Det Inspector John Milner told the court Broadhurst attempted to use the name of a senior police officer as influence during an interview. Broadhurst denied this, saying: 'I only mentioned the officer because he knows me at the Horley Wine Circle and he could corroborate why the ladies' panties were in my car.' — *Surrey Mirror* (G.H.Brown)

□ Police are considering rationing toilet paper in cells after a second discovery of it being used for an escape rope. — *Huddersfield Examiner* (D.F.Longmate)

□ Radio 3 listeners must by now be a little tired of having exhortations to buy a TV licence trotted out so frequently before a keenly awaited programme. One doesn't object to the message, but rather to the medium chosen. It seems highly improbable that people who are so despicably dishonest as to watch television without having paid a bean towards its cost are among those likely to be listening to music on Radio 3. — Letter in *Radio Times* (Chris Hogarth)

FIRST PERSON



Arthur
Marshall

French leave

There are times when even the best run households suffer some severe shock or other (a dead mouse in the flour bin) and although 'Myrtlebank' is normally all that could be wished for and the very epitome of gracious living with its spacious gardens and grounds all neat and tidy for winter, its polished furnishings in the stately saloons providing the *dernier cri* in the way of comfort, and its *cuisine raffinée* and the store-cupboards bursting with every kind of rare delicacy so that a visitor suddenly demanding tinned pilchards or baked beans on toast can be instantly accommodated, I myself recently suffered just such a shock as I have mentioned, and in those very store-cupboards of which I spoke.

With Christmas upon us (I write in mid-December) and with visitors happily expected, I was just checking over my selection of Preserves — Robertson's blackcurrant jam is a must, and I personally would not care to be for long without a supply of Tiptree's Morello Cherry Conserve (PART STONED it says on the jar, and a very good motto for the festive season) — when, nestling between a Branston Pickle and a pot of Miss Entwhistle's home-made crab apple jelly ('Not quite up to last year's, I'm afraid'), what do I suddenly see but a fully-charged canister of NIPPON ANT POWDER, with its clear warning that it should be kept well away from fish, pets, children and any form of food. You shudder, as well you may, with sympathetic horror at the risks I have been running and, though this is of less importance, the risks my guests have been running too. Risks to ants, not present in the store-cupboards, do not arise.

The last time that I had happy occasion to mention on this very wide-ranging page an invaluable domestic product it was Goddard's Silver Dip and my rightly adulatory words, spotted by the kind manufacturers, resulted in a generous jumbo carton of Goddard's arriving at my door. This, nice though it is not to have to buy any more Goddard's until about the year 2073, was honestly not my intention when raising the subject. It is even less so with the NIPPON ANT POWDER, admirably effective though it is and achieving all that it promises. Thank you, but I have a sufficiency of NIPPON. It is tempting to think, for otherwise why 'NIPPON?', that the powder is made in Cherry Blossom Land and perhaps the alarming black ants that, far larger than life, decorate the eye-catching canister are indeed Japanese ones, but the product seems to be the work of Synchemicals Ltd, resident no nearer the mysterious east than SE1. To operate the NIPPON, you remove cap (the canister's), squeeze the pliable body of the contraption and thus eject the powder as a fine dust. For best results, open up the ants' nest

('Hi there, everybody!') and dust liberally. 'Wash after use'. You bet. How the NIPPON came to be indoors, cheek by jowl with Branstons and Miss Entwhistle and not out in the garden shed together with other discouragers, I cannot imagine, but I am now increasingly absent-minded and it may well be that when I next visit the shed I shall find there a tin of tasty Ambrosia milk pudding, as delicious cold as hot, sharing a shelf with the Weedol.

The store-cupboards of my mind, so splendidly filled and row upon row with the intellectual equivalents of Tiptree's Morello and the Entwhistle jelly, have had this week to make room for further additions. As you know, I share with you any agreeable matters kindly supplied by readers, and a teacher of small children tells me that, in a Scripture lesson, one of her charges, invited to name the betrayer of Jesus, announced that it was Judas. Pressed further, she added the information that it was Judas Asparagus. Elsewhere a child was writing in an historical essay that 'Sir Walter Raleigh was one of Queen Elizabeth's best nights.' Could well be. Then there arrived (kind gentleman in Cambridge) another in our Curious Names Series, a communication having been received from somebody called Randy Rainwater, residing in, of all places, Ambridge, but the Pennsylvania one in the USA. And a merry Cheshire writer, drawing attention to the unending flow of sexual goings-on in 'Dallas', suggests that the series should be re-named 'Phallus', or even 'Phallus in Wonderland'.

The Cheshire gentleman comes from the Wirral, a district where there once lived a charming and unique friend of many of us and called Edward Bates, Eddie for short, and who,

Roger Woddiss

Glorious morning

'We looked at their philosophy, and they had a desire to make people understand what was happening.' — Lady Plowden, chairman of the IBA, on the franchise granted to TV-AM for breakfast television in 1983.

You must wake and call me early,
Call me early, mother dear,
In time to see the early show
(O that it were next year!).
Of all the treats in store, mother,
The maddest, merriest day
Will be when I get up at dawn
And yawn at Peter Jay!

Let us sing the hope of millions,
And the faith of Lady P.:
The happiest time for all mankind
Will be in '83,
When Rippon and Rantzen reign, mother,
And nobody counts the cost
Of the evergreen charm of Parkinson,
The vernal appeal of Frost!

What immensity of talent!
What a chance for thrusting youth,
With not a thought of private gain,
But a passion for public truth!
So here's to the early birds, mother,
And the worms who will understand
Why they knelt to the IBA, mother,
Who dealt them a lovely hand!

brave as a lion, was killed in the war while dropping low-level bombs on the odious Boches (one world war one might now just possibly forgive: two, never). I do not possess a copy of the Guinness Book of Records but I rather doubt whether there is listed there the name of the boy who ran away most often from school and at this late stage I would like to put Eddie's name forward. Playing truant is rather different and is now, I gather, a commonplace but in the early 30s to absent yourself at all, let alone run away, was a serious crime. Nerve and resolution were needed and, possessing a great deal of both, Eddie managed finely and did excellent pioneering work in this very exacting field.

The school from which he departed so frequently was Winchester College. He did not at all care for the life there, an aversion the guilt for which need not be laid at that august door for the public school does not exist that could have either pleased or contained him. His mode of departure was simple. No lengthy preparations. No food parcels and means of disguise. He stood not, obviously, upon the order of his going. He just went, and a Bradshaw enthusiast could tell us what was then (and there were some fascinating changes, I'll bet) the swiftest railway route to take him from Hampshire to the Wirral. Sometimes he left mid-morning, and after sampling a lesson or two. Sometimes he was up and away before first light ('Anybody seen Bates?'). Sometimes the mood took him in the afternoon and he would make a hasty bee-line for the station.

His delightful parents, Sir Percy and Lady Bates, bore all stoically. He was their only child and their first indication, often at the breakfast table, that their family of two was about to become once more a family of three and at full strength was usually a call from the lodge-keeper and his wife at the gates to the effect that they thought they had seen Master Edward walking up the drive, upon which information Lady Bates, for a mother is yet a mother, probably ordered more toast and another kipper, while assuming a suitably sorrowful and reproachful look. Eddie was allowed to remain at home for an hour or so, there were telephonings ('Yes, we have the young man here') and then the chauffeur, and latterly quite automatically I expect, started up the Daimler and a party of two, Eddie and his mother, set out south. I would give a lot to know the exact dialogue that subsequently went on between the absentee, his mother and the headmaster and housemaster, with the air thick with phrases such as 'But this just isn't good enough!' and 'Twice in a month is twice too often'. Did Lady Bates say 'Eddie is truly sorry for what he has done, Mr Popejoy'? I expect so. Mothers normally do.

I forget the exact number of Eddie's absences in one year, indeed the only year when he was, or rather was not, at Winchester, but if we say six we are certainly not overestimating, and he may well have reached double figures. He remembered with particular pleasure (I can hear his shrieks still) the final episode and the final return. Asked by Mr Popejoy, his housemaster, whether he would now give an undertaking to behave himself, Eddie gave a wild cry of 'No! No! No!' (one more than Nanette) and, flinging out an arm, managed to knock over a small table on which reposed Mr Popejoy's treasured collection of bibelots and knick-knacks, many of them frail and made of china and all of which fell to the floor with a merry tinkle. And in due course the Daimler bore him away northwards.

LETTERS

Afghanistan

From S. Milne

Fred Halliday's article (NS 5 December) was a refreshing change from the uninformed pontification on the subject that is so widespread throughout the Left.

An important point that Halliday touched on deserves to be emphasised: and that is his reference to the interview that Amin gave to 'Al-Sharq Al-Awsat' in which he stated that he had himself asked for Soviet military assistance. This fact has been almost totally ignored by the British press. Not surprisingly, since it makes the orthodoxy that the Soviet Union invaded the country and then invited itself in untenable. Amin was the head of the legitimate Afghan government (recognised by the West) at the time and thus had every right to request Soviet military aid under the Friendship Treaty. Nor has anyone come up with even the flimsiest piece of evidence that Soviet troops were involved in Amin's overthrow. I therefore fail to see why military and economic assistance to a progressive government, which is carrying out the most basic democratic reforms (education, women's rights, land reform) in the teeth of opposition from a tribal and feudal-based, foreign-backed, reactionary rebellion, should be considered 'imperialism'. During the Spanish Civil War, some on the left attacked the USSR, when it was itself embattled and weak, for failing to provide more aid to the Republic; now, when they are strong enough to give help to the Afghan revolution, it is considered gross interference!

The Left, and the Labour Party in particular, should be calling for an end to foreign interference in Afghanistan by those backing the rebels, including

Thatcher and Co. We should be backing international efforts to bring an end to this interference and thus create the conditions for Soviet withdrawal and an end to the fighting.

29 Jackson Road, London N7

From David Fernbach

Aristotle knew four kinds of cause, but Fred Halliday has discovered a fifth. The cause of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, he claims, is the support the Afghan rebels receive from Pakistan. By the same logic, the cause of any Soviet invasion of Poland will be the broadcasts of the BBC World Service. He accuses those who 'unrealistically' support national self-determination of fighting to the last Afghan; isn't this a charge always levied in connection with national liberation movements? Fred Halliday evidently subordinates self-determination to the higher interest of revolution (see *New Left Review*, Jan-Feb 1980). But shouldn't we have learned by now that popular support is what really matters in assessing social change, rather than the forcible imposition of supposedly socialist relations of production? Otherwise we end up only attacking one form of imperialism to substitute another — and the well-being of the Afghan people is certainly the last thing on the Kremlin's mind.

27 Priory Avenue, London N8

From Martin Shaw

There is a deep perversity in Fred Halliday's writing on Afghanistan. The blame for Russian occupation is subtly shifted to the Afghan resistance and their limited Western backing; they are only 'prolonging the Soviet forces' sojourn in Afghanistan'. It is rather as if the Vietnam war was blamed on the obstinacy of the Vietnamese and their

Soviet arms suppliers. If only they had given up, the Americans could have left a lot earlier!

Fred's articles are informative, but only after the reader has de-coded his subtly discriminating language: the 'rebels' commit 'systematic atrocities', 'Russian counter-insurgency operations' involve 'needless destruction and civilian deaths'. From which we learn that it is a vicious war in which the Russians are giving as good as they get. If only he could accept that Soviet interventionism is as self-serving as that of any imperial power, his reader's task would be a lot easier. I do not look forward to reading that a Soviet invasion of Poland can be avoided, provided the West stops encouraging the Poles in their demands for freedom and democracy!

Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Hull, Hull

A Socialist transport policy

From Dick Jones

Mick Hamer's article ('Success for a socialist transport policy', NS 28 November) prompts me to raise again a question to which I have never received a satisfactory answer. Why do so many socialists, who rightly condemn the privileges of private education and private medicine, turn a blind eye to the inequalities of private transport? The growth of private motoring has contributed hugely to the decline in public transport, and the greater the number of people who own cars, the greater the disadvantage to those who do not. The annual subsidy of £3 billion in tax concessions on company cars is especially unjust at a time when bus and train

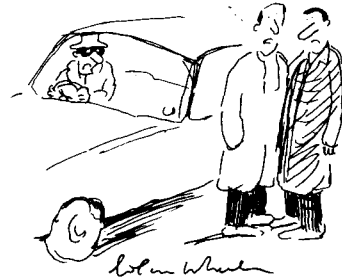
sian models.

Secondly, take the vexed question of wages. The evidence is overwhelming — and admitted to be so by all wage researchers that I know of — that price expectations are the major determinant of wage increases; this is so, even after including the severe 1974-5 recession which was largely of the same order as the current one. It is therefore hard to justify recent statements by some economists that it is the recession and only the recession that is reducing wage increases.

To represent price expectations, some researchers have successfully used rational expectations methods. Others have used combinations of past inflation rates (or 'adaptive' expectations). But it has been generally recognised that these combinations change or need supplementing when policy regimes change; for example, special allowance must be made for the 1967 devaluation and for the shift to floating exchange rates. This is precisely what the rational expectations approach would predict; namely that a particular 'adaptive' forecasting method could perform reasonably well under one set of circumstances but would fail, unaltered, under another set. The evidence for rational expectations is therefore accumulating; combined with the theoretical presumption that people will use the best available forecasts, it amounts to a strong case for its use as a working assumption in macroeconomic analysis.

The University of Liverpool, Eleanor Rathbone Building, PO Box 147, Liverpool

ANOTHER
SOCIALIST MOTORIST
WITH A GUILT COMPLEX



services are in many places being cut back.

Socialists cannot want the car-less (often, of course, disadvantaged in other ways) to become increasingly isolated and immobile. So why? Is it merely electoral, based on the popularity of the motor car? Or the industry, which must continue to produce cars, however unfair they are? But I can't see how it can be wrong to jump the queue in the waiting room but not at the bus stop.

102 Beaufort Street, London SW3

Orwell v Martin

From Paul Johnson

I had not intended to make any further comment on the Kingsley Martin-Orwell business, but the letter from John Peter (NS 19/26 December) rests on a misapprehension, which I must clear up. I did not say, or imply, that Kingsley was right to reject the POUM articles. On the contrary: in my original letter I said I disagreed with Kingsley's decision — had I been Editor then I would certainly have published them — but that I felt it my duty, since Kingsley and his wife were dead and had no children to defend his memory, to point out that he had a perfectly arguable case, and that his behaviour was certainly not 'revolting'. This passage in my letter was cut (incidentally wrecking the syntax of the paragraph) without my permission, which would not have been given.

Copthall, Iwer, Bucks.

Education cuts disputed

From M.J. Henley, County Education Officer

Your reference to the position in Northamptonshire in your piece 'Fighting the cuts in the courts' (NS 28 November) is pretty wide of the mark. We are not abolishing all remedial teaching in primary schools and we have not circularised all Head Teachers ordering them not to discuss the effect of the cuts on their schools.

Northamptonshire County Council, Northampton House, Northampton

Information wanted

The 'Invergordon Mutiny': I am trying to trace men who served in the Atlantic fleet in 1931, and who were caught up in the events in Cromarty Firth that September. I am preparing a Radio Four documentary on the mutiny and would like to hear from anyone who was involved.

Alan Ereira, BBC, Broadcasting House, London W1

Correction: In 'A Tale of Two Bookshops' (NS 12/12/80) we said that Benjamin and Tulp was out of print. It is still available, published by Kestrel Books (hb, £1.95).

The great rose-tinted specs show cont'd

Before Christmas Peter Kellner, the NS's Political Editor, engaged in a debate in this paper's pages with Patrick Minford, Professor of Economics at Liverpool University, and Britain's leading monetarist forecaster. We print Minford's latest reply below. This is not, however, intended to be a private argument: other readers are encouraged to join in.

From Patrick Minford

There is little point in my commenting further on Peter Kellner's detailed remarks (NS 5 December); I leave those to your readers and to events, with one caveat. Though I have played the game with him, it is really not particularly informative to take a single forecast of anything and say it was right, or it was wrong. To expect any forecast to be right is to misunderstand the nature of forecasts; they summarise existing information and we know that new information will occur to make them wrong. The test of forecasting methods can only be carried out over an extended period; and it is that they should use information efficiently, i.e. that their errors should not be systematically related to the information available at the time they were made.

I would rather discuss Kellner's proposed theory of wages, prices and interest rates:

(They) are fixed by the interaction of various things: government pol-

icy, past inflation rates, subjective ideas of fairness and the going rate, cost levels, demand conditions, and so on.

This is not a theory in any meaningful sense; it is not testable and it does not appear to be based on good economic theory of how people behave. The equations used in the Liverpool model are however based on economic theory (and evidence) of how consumers and firms behave, in their demands and supplies of money, labour, and goods. They assume that people care about the real purchasing power and not the money value of their wages, their money, and their sales. To suppose otherwise is surely senseless. In order to write money contracts, however, they must forecast prices, and mistakes are expensive, so that they have a strong incentive to make efficient forecasts. This is where the logic of some 'Keynesian' models is hard to follow, when they assert that people use palpably inefficient forecast methods; for, at the very least, why should they not use the forecasts available for the price of a daily newspaper?

As for evidence on rational expectations, take first financial and commodity markets. There is a large and growing body of evidence that these markets are, if not fully efficient, nevertheless tolerably close to this. This evidence is inconsistent with the view that expected returns available in these markets can be strongly positive or negative under different policy regimes or at different points in the economic cycle; yet this is a salient property of most UK Keyne-

BOOKS & ARTS

Ken Richardson reviews three books concerned with Chomsky's theory of linguistic universals and innate language programming.

Aboard Noam's ark

Even the proverbial person-in-the-street must be aware that something exciting is going on in the scientific investigation of language. For the academic, however, the subject is boiling and the name of the prime instigator of all the excitement, Noam Chomsky, looms very large. Indeed his name is very rarely absent from *any* philosophical debate today, and probably comes top of a 20th-century citations league table in the human sciences.

The term revolution is regularly used to describe Chomsky's achievements in linguistics. On the other hand there is a barrage of criticism testifying to the fact that it's a very odd revolution indeed. What is strange about it is the way in which the dazzling new insights articulated by Chomsky about the nature of language have been framed in some astonishingly antiquated psychological lumber, in particular the theory stemming from Descartes and traceable to Plato that the essential qualities of language are genetically preprogrammed or 'inborn' like the sneeze, suckling and swallowing reflexes.

The theory is consistent with some of the most striking peculiarities of language: for instance, the presence in all languages of certain common features, or 'linguistic universals', such as the subject and predicate categories; the effortlessness and rapidity with which infants learn their language seemingly without overt instruction; and the fact that they do so in the face of only very imperfect or 'degenerate' language samples. It's the alarming implications of the theory for the whole nature of the human mind that cause all the trouble.

For instance the theory forces us into the belief that, since genetically preprogrammed, language must exist as a distinct 'faculty' of the mind alongside other, similarly preprogrammed, faculties such as numeracy (historians may here be reminded of the 18th- and 19th-century faculty psychologists who assessed people's characters by measuring the bumps on their heads); that experience serves merely as a triggering or priming function to the development of abilities which aren't learned but just 'grow' (we don't 'learn' to develop arms instead of wings, says Chomsky); and, most alarming of all, that what humans can ever know has already been laid down in our genetic endowments, other things (the understanding of human behaviour, perhaps) being 'beyond our cognitive reach', i.e. unknowable.

Because of the issues thus raised in psychology, the brain sciences and philosophy, as well as linguistics, there is little doubt that the whole event will be recorded as one of the

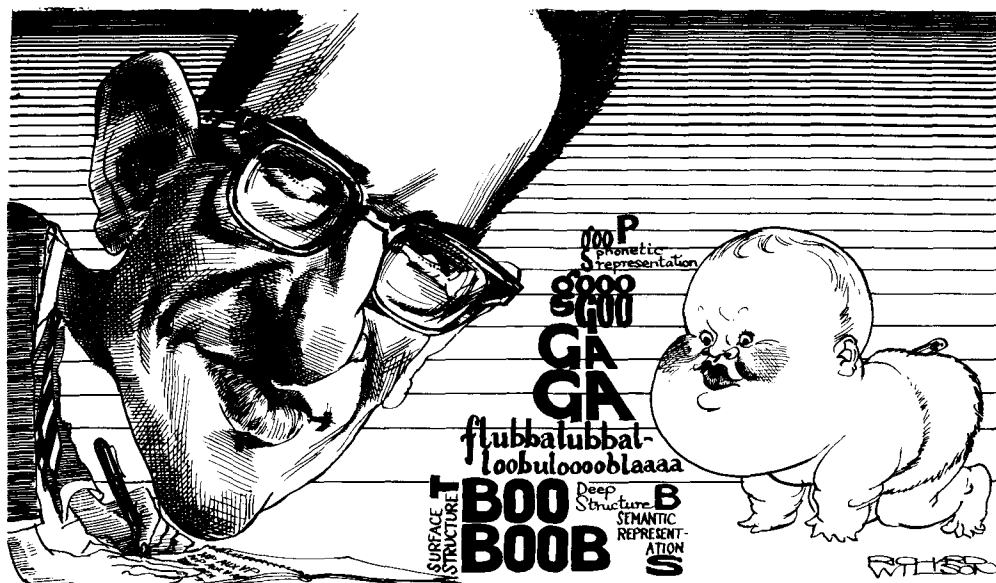
outstanding debates of the 20th century. The present three books deal with most of these issues in different ways. Smith and Wilson provide a lucid account of 'Chomsky's theory' and of the most important criticisms of it. *Modern Linguistics* is especially instructive on the most original aspects of the theory — the nature of the so-called deep-structures, transformational rules, and so on — and provides abundant illustrations and a useful glossary. Even the naive reader will get something from it although the effort required will probably be more than the authors envisage.

In his most recent book, *Rules and Representations* — another series of lectures

check with some careful observation). Chomsky's response to this research tends to be dismissive — either not to discuss it, as in the present book, or, elsewhere, to state that it's of little relevance to the veracity of his theory anyway.

This is not to suggest that Chomsky is dogmatic: he can be eminently reasonable. What does come across from this and other recent works is his growing impatience with a refractory opposition, which, while remaining unconverted, has only puny alternatives to offer. 'Present me with a better theory and I'll start listening', is what Chomsky seems to be saying.

In *Making Sense*, Geoffrey Sampson attempts something along those lines by attacking the 'limited mind' view of the Chomsky school and replacing it with the 'creative mind' view based on the philosophy of science of Sir Karl Popper. The book is written in a lively style and the view he attacks most clearly portrayed, but his reply is often philosophical, often technical and often extremely thin. For instance, one of the corollaries of Chomsky's theory of genetic programming is that we are all born with the



involving a great deal of repetition — Chomsky does not attempt to write anything new so much as extend and clarify things that he has written before. It summarises his own views (in parts much revised over the years) of his theory today and of at least some of his critics. Unfortunately it also reveals still further the tendency often to be found in 'authorities', of writing with increasingly dogmatic tones. Here the theory is put more stridently and confidently than ever but too often in the form of assertions that are not backed up. This makes Chomsky appear very slippery at times. For instance, in support of his theory of innate language programming, he has often claimed that the language which infants actually hear is so imperfect as to make it unlikely that they could learn anything from it, except with great difficulty (listen to the umms and aahs, hesitations, false starts, grammatical errors, and so on, in an average conversation between adults and you'll know what he means). But this turns out not to be so for the special case of adults' talk to infants. Taped samples of such speech have shown it to consist of short, well-formed, simply-constructed utterances as if to deliberately provide the ideal stimulus for language learning (again the reader can make a rough

same potential for linguistic attainment. Unfortunately such is the complexity of language in use that no-one has yet seriously suggested how we might test this corollary. Sampson, however, finds it so distasteful as to put forward as 'evidence' his own 'strong impression that there are particular syntactic constructions . . . which are mastered only by the more competent speakers of a language'.

Chomsky has a right to expect more than this. But few critics are capable of grappling with the *totality* of the brilliant linguistic insights in their archaic psychological shell. The problem seems to be that the *description* of language, always the most impressive dimension of human behaviour, has far outstripped the *psychological* theory that can cope with it. This is a common phenomenon in science and the solution may just be a matter of time: present research in the so-called 'pragmatics' of communication, involving more complex presuppositions about the social context of language functions, is already throwing up new conceptions of language learning. But the anachronisms of modern linguistics are likely to persist until we are presented with entirely new theories of the whole nature of the human mind, which is what is really at issue in the Chomsky debate.

Modern Linguistics: the Results of Chomsky's Revolution by NEIL SMITH & DEIRDRE WILSON
Penguin £1.95

Rules and Representations by NOAM CHOMSKY
Blackwell £7.50

Making Sense by GEOFFREY SAMPSON Oxford
£7.95

Bohdan Nahaylo on five books which offer a negative portrait of contemporary Soviet society.

Life is elsewhere

May One Believe — In Russia? contains a moving appeal recently smuggled out of a Soviet labour camp, in which a group of political prisoners warn against confusing appearances with reality. They cite the celebrated example of Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to the USSR when the unsuspecting guest was duped by a carefully staged display of conditions in Soviet penal institutions and returned home full of praise for them.

The Soviet Union persists in setting itself up as a model for others — as mankind's hope for the future. Consequently, the Soviet authorities continue to be concerned with fostering appearances. All of these books probe through the facade, revealing glimpses of Soviet reality. In contrast to the many achievements claimed by the USSR, what emerges is a gloomy picture of a huge, ossified, bureaucratic state, in which, to borrow a phrase from the Czech writer Milan Kundera, 'life is elsewhere' — in this case, in the subterranean cavities of its fractured foundations.

Take for instance the Soviet claim that religious tolerance is strictly observed in the USSR and that no one is ever persecuted for his beliefs. The ambiguously entitled *May One Believe — In Russia?* provides striking evidence that this is not so. It consists of an assortment of documents accompanied by extremely useful background notes dealing with violations of religious liberty to which believers of all faiths are subjected in the USSR. The editors skilfully guide us through published and secret Soviet legislation that severely restricts organised religious activity and prescribes imprisonment for practising religious beliefs in a manner disapproved of by the state. The numerous examples of religious intolerance presented in this book include the cases of Valeriya Makeeva, a Russian Orthodox nun who since 1978 has been held in a mental hospital after making and selling belts embroidered with Psalm 91; the several million strong Ukrainian Catholic Church — the largest denomination in the Soviet Union that is completely outlawed; and Reshat Dzhemilev, a Crimean Tatar activist who in his appeals to the King of Saudi Arabia and Muhammed Ali has described the discrimination being practised against Soviet Muslims. Far from withering away, religious belief in the Soviet Union is in some areas undergoing a revival.

Likewise the Soviet authorities maintain that the nationalities question in the USSR has long since been solved. Nevertheless, the large

proportion of non-Russian national rights campaigners among Soviet political prisoners indicates that this is merely wishful thinking. It is also borne out by the quasi-official nature of anti-semitism in the Soviet Union and the fact that in recent years so many Soviet Jews have risked so much in deciding to seek permission to emigrate from the USSR. The 1979 edition of Leonard Schroeter's *The Last Exodus* is probably the best treatment of this now familiar story. In a scrupulously detailed and lucid account, Schroeter traces the history of the Jewish emigration movement in the USSR, the efforts, sacrifices and organisational skills of which have been rewarded — 'to an extent that would have been viewed as incomprehensible only a few years ago' — by the emigration during the 1970s of over 200,000 Soviet Jews.

Mark Popovsky, a Russian popular science writer now living in the West, provides a fascinating insight into the state of Soviet science in his polemical study entitled *Science in Chains*. As the title suggests, he is highly critical of the way Soviet science has been placed under the control of the party, becoming a 'manipulated science', often nothing more than 'an appendage of the Soviet military machine'. In an account rich with anecdotal material, Popovsky argues that Soviet science is an 'organism smitten with ethical degradation and a cancerous administrative growth'.

He describes in considerable detail its rigid hierarchism, the all-pervasive censorship and secrecy, and the poor management by officials who as often as not owe their positions to their 'party-mindedness' rather than to any proven scientific abilities. The system is heavily weighted against genuine scientific research, invention and discovery. 'What with bureaucratisation, serf-labour methods and the general dearth of equipment', the 5,000 Soviet research institutions are, on the average, we are told, 'about as efficient as Denis Papin's 17th-century pressure cooker'. Science in the Soviet Union, Popovsky claims, has come to represent a means by which a great number of people can earn 'an easy, simple and undisturbed livelihood'.

Popovsky ends his book on an optimistic note. He sees hope in the fact that within Soviet 'manipulated' science there are pockets of resistance consisting of the 'unsubmissive ones' — the small number of scientists who reject official control. They have their counterparts in literature, too. Geoffrey Hosking's *Beyond Socialist Realism* sets out to show that despite the stifling atmosphere, some works of 'great interest and probably literary value' have found their way into print in the Soviet Union during the last 20 years or so. He treats us to an illuminating and thoughtful examination of recent trends in Soviet fiction, focusing on intellectual, social and spiritual themes, while explicitly avoiding evaluation of literary merit.

Though it still has a long way to go, Hosking discovers encouraging signs that Soviet literary life is gradually easing its way out of the straitjacket that has confined it

for so long. Different canons are being displayed at the creative level than at the critical one. 'The rejection of the totalitarian image of man' — the future-oriented, optimistic, confident and active stereotype prescribed by socialist realism — 'has been taking place in officially published literature as well as *samizdat*'. Indeed, Soviet critics have had to execute such 'exegetical gymnastics' to demonstrate that authors are still faithful to socialist realism, albeit renovated and more flexible, that Hosking is led to conclude that this term, 'unless it has become genuinely meaningless, can no longer be applied'.

Significantly, 'village prose' has emerged as a major feature of the literary scene, with Vasily Belov and Valentin Rasputin as its leading exponents. This atavistic current with its explicit Russian nationalism, muted religious elements and at times frank social criticism represents a search for the uncontaminated sources of Russian culture. Its consternation at the erosion of traditional values in the face of industrialisation and urbanisation comes dangerously close to condemning the consequences of 'sovietisation'. Had Hosking indeed discussed Soviet fiction, the literature of all the peoples of the USSR, rather than just that of the Russians, he would have found abundant additional material on the flight to the past and the village as a means of affirming national roots.

A fine, almost imperceptible, fluctuating line appears to divide the permissible from the officially unacceptable in the USSR. Of the handful of writers examined in Hosking's book, all of whom started their writing careers in Soviet journals, four have overstepped the boundary and have been driven into *samizdat*. The dissident Marxist historian Roy Medvedev, however, seems to have acquired the ability of maintaining footholds in both camps. *On Soviet Dissent* consists of a series of interviews conducted with him by Piero Ostellino, then Moscow correspondent for *Corriere della Sera*, as well as several more recent items. Strangely enough the book contains no mention of the fact that in 1978 Medvedev's severe criticism of leading Soviet human rights campaigners, which coincided with a loud official propaganda campaign against them, discredited him in the eyes of most Soviet dissenters and caused some of his closest colleagues to break with him. Consequently, Medvedev has been isolated from most dissident circles and his recent writings on the state of Soviet dissent have drawn criticism for containing 'errors of fact' and 'strange judgments' (See *Index on Censorship*, 1979/5, pp. 77-78). *On Soviet Dissent* reiterates Medvedev's conviction that change in the Soviet Union will emanate from within the party, though he admits that he sees fewer indications now of this than a decade ago. How and when this might come about remains 'unpredictable'.

Among this week's contributors:

KEN RICHARDSON is a Lecturer in Psychology in the Faculty of Educational Studies at the Open University.

PETER DEWS is currently working on a critical account of French philosophy in the 1960s and 1970s.

CAROL RUMENS's collection of poems, *Unplayed Music*, is due out soon from Secker.

May One Believe — In Russia? edited by Michael Bourdeaux & Michael Rowe Darton, Longman & Todd £3.45

The Last Exodus by LEONARD SCHROETER Washington £4.80

Science in Chains by MARK POPOVSKY Collins/Harvill £8.95

Beyond Socialist Realism by GEOFFREY HOSKING Granada £9.50

On Soviet Dissent ROY MEDVEDEV interviewed by Piero Ostellino Constable £5.95

Christopher Hitchens

Magic circles

Personal Impressions by ISAIAH BERLIN *Hogarth Press* £9.50

'I may be mistaken about this, but I think that this was the first class or seminar on a contemporary thinker ever held in Oxford.' That throwaway sentence, which occurs in a wonderful essay on J.L. Austin, encapsulates the style of Isaiah Berlin in this collection. Written (perhaps dictated) with a sort of lazy but confident elegance, the book is an elegiac for the men and occasional women who have filled Berlin's horizon. It gives colour and scope to his conceit of the fox; the polymathic humanist is what he really likes, though there are flashes of sympathy for the religious and the mystic as well. In the background, not always directly glimpsed but invariably present, is Oxford. Berlin has a certain idea of Oxford, and it accompanies him everywhere.

Those who know Berlin's work will take the breadth and generosity of these essays for granted. There is also an effortless internationalism, and some wit (I remember a dinner where Berlin awarded grades to Marx in the Oxford PPE school 'I think an alpha plus for politics and a beta — a beta *minus* — for economics'). The chief disadvantage is an unwillingness to be severe, but since most of these essays are obituaries such reluctance may be forgivable.

There are two basic groups or headings. The first consists of academics (Plamenatz, Bowra, Namier, Austin, Pares). The second is political (Churchill, Roosevelt, Weizmann, Felix Frankfurter). The two final essays are both exceptions; one concerns Einstein and Israel, the other is a stunning account of Berlin's meetings with Russian writers.

In the first group, the piece on J.L. Austin is, I think, the central one. It is very well written indeed, and conveys a real sense of what the man must have been like. It is, also, a fruitful essay philosophically. Berlin has the gift of paraphrase and, almost between the lines, he gives a concise account of Oxford philosophy and its peculiar method. It also contains an important clue to Berlin's concept of the good life:

I don't think that, like Moore's disciples at the beginning of the century, of whom Keynes speaks in a memoir of his early ideas, any of us thought that no one before us had discovered the truth about the nature of knowledge or anything else; but like them, we did think that no one outside the magic circle — in our case Oxford, Cambridge, Vienna — had much to teach us. This was vain and foolish and, I have no doubt, irritating to others. But I suspect that those who have never been under the spell of this kind of illusion, even for a short while, have not known true intellectual happiness.

The title of the book is more carefully chosen than might at first appear. The essays are both highly personal and very impressionistic. Even when he writes about high matters of state, and enterprises of great moment, Berlin is anecdotal, laconic and individual. The twin studies of Churchill and Roosevelt follow this pattern, while reminding us that Berlin is very much at home in the political world, and not immured in ivory as some believe. It becomes clear in the Roosevelt essay what kind of person Berlin admires:

He was large-hearted and possessed wide political horizons, imaginative sweep, understanding of the time in which he lived and of the direction of the great new forces at work in the 20th century . . . he was in favour of life and movement, the promotion of the most generous possible fulfilment of the largest possible number of human wishes, and not in favour of caution and retrenchment and sitting still.

'Spacious' is the word one always comes back to in contemplating Berlin, and that passage illustrates it (together with his persistent tendency to over-praise).

A cosmopolitan himself, Berlin nonetheless admires people who stick by their own roots and peoples. He illuminates John Plamenatz by discussing him in terms of his Montenegrin origins, and he writes very sympathetically about the Jewish cause. The study of Chaim Weizmann, which contains many unprovable Zionist assertions, is so seductively composed that I had to read it two-and-a-half times before I could begin to develop disagreements. Similarly, his portrait of Albert Einstein is so beguiling that the political bias looks like politeness. And, in one of those little observations which stick in the mind, Berlin remarks that Einstein was the first scientist whose face was recognisable to the public. I wish he had found the time to write of Isaac Deutscher, a wandering Jew if ever there was one, whose career he impeded whenever he could.

Peter Dews on Foucault's thought

Regime of truth

Power/Knowledge by MICHEL FOUCAULT
Harvester £18.50

Herculine Barbin edited by Michel Foucault
Harvester £7.95

Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth by ALAN
SHERIDAN *Tavistock* £10.50 & £4.50

Recently, with the break-up of the Althusserian orthodoxy on the theoretical Left in Britain, the work of Michel Foucault has begun to play a distinctive role. While in some quarters alternative and temporarily occluded Marxist currents have reasserted themselves, a number of former Althusserians have discovered in the writings of Foucault a far more nuanced, empirically denser — perhaps even more 'materialist' — account of the relations between historical discourse, forms of knowledge and modes of oppression than had been available within a structuralised Marxism. Indeed, the claim is now frequently made that Foucault's work represents a decisive advance over any form of Marxist analysis.

This fresh interest in Foucault coincided with the publication in English of two works — *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and the *History of Sexuality* (1978) — in which Foucault himself renewed his theoretical perspectives. During the structuralist decade of the Sixties his work was dominated by a concern with the immanent 'rules of formation' of scientific discourse, particularly the discourse of 'human sciences', and had few explicitly political connotations. Under the impact of May '68, however, and of the social struggles which emerged in its train, Foucault's research underwent a major redirection. He has become increasingly concerned with what he sees as the central role of the human sciences in contemporary

I have saved, as Berlin has, the Russian writers for the end. A generation of people learnt to feel a kind of sympathy for Russian writing from his work on Herzen. It is extremely difficult for someone of Russian origin to transmit these impulses to others, and no doubt we've all apprehended them imperfectly. But this account of his return to his homeland and his mother tongue, his meetings with Pasternak and Akhmatova, is the jewel of the collection. He conveys a sense of the writer's dilemma under Stalinism, not by depicting the grim routinism of the bureaucracy but by stressing its caprice, its arbitrary and fickle character. He also has a strong empathy with the Russian appetite for literature and poetry, and can write with appropriate subtlety about the 'unacknowledged legislators' and their woes. And, yes:

Fountain House, the palace of the Sheremetevs, is a magnificent late baroque building with gates of exquisite ironwork for which Leningrad is famous, and built around a spacious court, not unlike the quadrangle of a large Oxford or Cambridge college.

Some people think that Berlin had a love affair with Anna Akhmatova. After reading his account of her, I should say that, consummated or not, he loved her all right.

This is an amazingly enjoyable book from a very gifted and fortunate man. If only all liberals were like that.

strategies of domination and social control.

The selection of essays and interviews edited by Colin Gordon usefully assembles a good deal of the collateral material which has accompanied this second phase of Foucault's career. Here Foucault comments on his own intellectual development and on the themes of his major works, engages in debate on specific political questions (Soviet dissidence, the nature of 'revolutionary justice'), and elaborates his novel view of the operation of 'power'. It is this last topic which lies at the heart of Foucault's recent concerns, and is touched on in nearly every piece in the book. It is also central to claims that Foucault's analyses are finer than any based upon Marxism.

The contrast with Marxism is clear. In a pair of lectures reproduced in *Power/Knowledge* Foucault argues that power does not consist in the domination of one class or social group over another. Indeed, he suggests that power is not the kind of thing which can be simply 'possessed' or 'exercised'. It must be seen as dispersed throughout society, invested in numerous local institutions — families, schools, hospitals, prisons — rather than concentrated in the apparatus of the state. Foucault further suggests that power must be viewed as positive and productive, rather than simply repressive or exclusive. Its primary function is to constitute 'normalised', obedient and industrious individuals, to maximise the public 'welfare'. In contrast to Althusser, for whom only ideologies can have a practico-social function, Foucault argues that knowledge itself may be found in a highly compromising liaison with power. More specifically, within our societies the human sciences constitute a 'regime of truth' under which individuals can be categorised, monitored and corrected.

Foucault's conception of power possesses a number of advantages. It breaks decisively with the assumption, so reluctantly and painfully relinquished by Marxists, that all relations of power can be derived from a primary class-contradiction. It makes clear that the transformation of the state need not automatically lead

to a transformation of power-relations at other levels. And it focuses attention on a shadowy domain of 'normalisation' and social control, obliquely related to the official juridical system and populated by psychiatrists and educationalists, town-planners and social workers. Among the subjects touched on by Foucault himself in *Power/Knowledge* are the history of the confessional, the architecture of prisons, and the constitution of centralised medical authorities in the 18th century. Foucault appears to cast aside the clumsy, hierarchical apparatus of 'instances' and return us to the real materiality of events.

This, at least, is the opinion of Alan Sheridan in *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth*. Most of Sheridan's book is taken up with a detailed exposition of the Foucauldian corpus, and as such it will chiefly be of use for those wanting an overview of the terrain before engaging with the texts of Foucault himself. However, in his concluding chapter, Sheridan does offer a general assessment of Foucault's status. It is here that he is at his most misleading. Indeed, Sheridan's contention that Marxists have remained embroiled in idealist metaphysics, while Foucault inherited from his theoretical master Nietzsche a concern with 'real history', can only be described as a travesty. Nietzsche himself admitted that his way of reporting historical facts was 'really to tell the story of my own experiences *à propos* of past ages and men'. Similarly, Foucault is not a historian in the conventional sense but a spinner of philosophical allegories; much of the fascination of his work derives from the tension between its density of historical reference and an underlying philosophical purpose. *Discipline and Punish*, for example, is an account of the emergence of the prison, but it can also — and must also — be read as a discourse on the relations between truth, power and subjectivity in society.

The same double-reading applies equally to a comparatively minor exercise, such as Foucault's editing and presentation of the memoirs of a 19th-century hermaphrodite in *Herculine Barbin*. Although less complete in its documentation than *I, Pierre Rivière . . .*, *Herculine Barbin* bears the same kind of complementary relation to Foucault's recent *History of Sexuality* which the earlier collective work on the case of the peasant parricide bore to his book on the prison. Herculine's novelettish memoirs recount her education at a girl's boarding school, and how she herself later became a teacher at a school for girls, where she has a clandestine affair with a female colleague. This idyll is shattered when, as the result of a chance medical examination, she is reclassified at the age of 21 as a man. Pursued by scandal, Herculine — now Abel — leaves his provincial home for Paris, only to meet with failure, despondency and an early suicide.

For Foucault the lesson is clear: we do not need a 'true' sex, determined by psychiatrists and doctors, and pored over by psychoanalysts. Herculine was better off before a new masculine identity was imposed upon her by the nascent medico-legal complex, in what he terms the 'happy limbo of non-identity'. The phrase echoes numerous others which recur throughout Foucault's work. For, ever since *Madness and Civilization*, he has been in quest of those modes of human experience which vex and elude the taxonomies of science. In *Herculine Barbin*, as in *I, Pierre Rivière . . .*, the aberrant truth of a first person testimony clashes with the objectifying discourse of the experts in human behaviour.

FICTION

Gillian Wilce

Doing or being

Sleeping Dogs Lie by JULIAN CLOAG *Secker* £6.95

Cactus by ANNA WILSON *Onlywomen Press*, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1 £2.25

'Fuck Freud' is one of Dr Hugh Welchman's furious, drunken thoughts towards the end of this cold tale. And, that, in a sense, is what Julian Cloag has been doing throughout *Sleeping Dogs Lie*. It was an important stage in the formation of Freud's theory of childhood sexual and emotional development when he discovered that the sexual traumas 'recalled' by his patients were in fact fantasies. What is of interest analytically is a person's interior life, the attitudes and feelings growing from childhood relationships — not a single event so dramatic that it could bring the crime squad battering at the door. Julian Cloag has twisted this finding back on to its head. When Dr Welchman takes on undergraduate Alex Brinton with his phobia about stone stairs, he is opening an external, factual can of worms.

Alex soon, easily remembers the origin of his phobia: his mother tumbling down the cellar steps. And from this point on the methods of the consulting room cease to be of any value, and Alex becomes a bit player. Layer after layer of mendacity is stripped away. Was mother's dive down the steps accidental or was it murder? If the latter, who pushed — son, daughter, husband, friend, future wife? Who is now or has been in love with whom? The answering, or apparent answering, of questions leads to further violent death.

The book is larded with psychological language, so it is a disappointment to find that in the long run it does not concern itself at all with psychological insight. Dr Welchman himself is never very convincing in the consult-

ing room — but then we find that Alex's family doctor (who is not, of course, just his family doctor) has chosen Welchman for reasons quite other than his professional skill, and finally we see Welchman completely unable to help anyone as the whole imbroglio of crime, accusation, counter-accusation, confession, false confession, and death turns itself back into his own home. The twisting inside out is complete. Welchman is the sufferer and cannot heal himself.

The intricacies of the plot could have been highly implausible, but in fact the whole thing is arranged with perfect internal consistency. Not only are all the ends neatly sewed back into the middle of the knot, but the book is full of echoes and repetitions, all most carefully wrought. And yet to what end? Ultimately, there is only the icy mist across the Fens and the plot. Fairly soon after the beginning one finds oneself reading to find out who did what to whom. About two-thirds the way through one becomes weary of incident, wanting to say 'never mind any more clever twists; just tell me the answer and let me go'. It is a mystery novel but without the catharsis of the classic detective story when one person is found to be the scapegoat for all the guilt. Here all are guilty, all are rather unpleasant, wholly self-absorbed and, in spite of their hectic, bloody lives, not very interesting.

Cactus is more flawed as a novel but much more engaging. At the end of one feels as if one has just had a difficult, tiring, sometimes argumentative conversation with a friend rather than read a book. Very little happens in the Cloag sense. Four lesbian women think about things and talk to each other, try to find out how to live. Ann and Dee have come to make a life together in a village; one wants to talk to local women, the other to paint for them. They meet Nell, older, solitary, keeping her shop and carefully guarding her loneliness and her memory of the one important relationship of her youth, with Bea — Bea who went away to marry and have children, but now comes back disturbingly, into Nell's life. Ann paints and worries; Dee is more impulsive, open, most likely to make bridges to other people; Nell is set in her isolation as if in clear, shiny ice; Bea is the most conventional, impelled towards her past partly by the emptiness of a middle-aged woman's life when her children don't need her any more. And yet, they are at times like four heads on one person. As one woman, they fish into the capacious pockets of their smocks/overalls/gardening aprons for the cigarettes which accompany every moment of crisis or thoughtfulness. This is partly a fictional failure (the younger women particularly I cannot see clearly), but partly too an expression of their closeness against the world, which seems to them entirely hostile and unaccommodating.

I'm tired of always having to use cactus skills, [Ann says] as if that's all there ever was for lesbians in the world — drink in the fleeting support of the ghetto, grow a thick skin to withstand the heat of a hostile environment, go sit in the desert for a year drinking your juices meantly.

The book ends without solutions, except for the merest hint of a change in Beatrice. When I wanted to argue about the isolation which it seemed they were building for themselves, I was answered pre-emptively by the strength of Ann's feeling crying in her head, 'fuck moderation, fuck compromise, fuck accessibility', while she continues to chop the vegetables for lunch. *Cactus* has an honest emotional power which makes you take seriously the unfamiliar experience of others.

Carol Rumens

Girls, blossoming

Girls, blossoming in enlightened houses — Sartre in paperback, Daddy in the kitchen, liberal politics over the Sunday roast — wise, though not virgins, streamlined by Levis and Tampax, well-fed hair curtaining thoughtful profiles, when the lamps burn late in your suburban study-bedrooms, and you renew puzzled acquaintanceship with Maggie Tulliver, or ruined Tees, have you arrived at the freedom that we wished you

(we, who show no anger though your glances linger and grow sleek over the bodies you so calmly own) — or has a darkness fallen in your hopes as if those broken heroines had risen and beckoned you into their fresh-cut pages, love waking in you like a sudden tightness of starched cloth and lacing, to clutch your breath, and cloud the glass you stare at with silences and pallor, the ancestral, immutable greensickness of our race?

The Barnes Awards

The first thing my television disgorged on 1 January 1980 was an advertisement for Kotex, quickly profiting from the new decade's relaxed rules about hyping rude things. It was a suave item of well-scrubbed vagueness, involving an impeccably laundered lady riding on the dodgems and the slogan 'I'm glad I switched.' Not switched from the helter-skelter, one deduced. The second thing I noted was an interview with President Carter in which he found himself tongue-tied with fear at the word 'lie'. In answer to a reporter's challenge about Brezhnev — 'He's lying, isn't he, Mr President?' — the sad-faced mongoose replied, 'He is not telling the facts adequately, that is the case.'

So began another year of gentle evasions from the medium which prides itself on its intimate directness. It climaxed, of course, in that rivetting coverage of the Knightsbridge siege. What could be more exciting, more true, more informative, we felt, as we watched the puffs of smoke, the scurrying figures, the occasional shadowy gun, and the final line of swaddled figures (hostages or gunmen?) being led away. It was lauded as a televisual triumph; but on later reflection, while it seemed to show us everything, it actually told us nothing. The commentators, with little to impart, were there merely to reassure us that our sound hadn't gone; and the two channels between them never managed to tell us the story in the comprehensive, old-fashioned way that the newspapers subsequently did.

With this instructive moment at its centre, 1980 on television followed a familiar course: a lively spring, a lower-depths summer, an autumnal perk-up (aided by the return of licence-time), and an overkill Christmas. It was a year when Reginald Bosanquet went away — and nobody noticed; when Parky promised to go away to Australia in a million-pound deal; and when the plastic nappy look finally went away at Wimbledon. All events of equal importance.

The Barnes Awards for 1980 were as fiercely contested as usual. In the conventional categories the rapidly greying judges came to the following decisions. Best new play: Ian McEwan's *The Imitation Game* (BBC-1). Best revival: Maugham's *Sheppey* (Festival, BBC-1). Best non-fiction series: *Hollywood* (Thames). Best fiction series: shared between *The Old Curiosity Shop* (BBC-1) and *Mackenzie* (BBC-1). Best interviewer: Melvyn Bragg (three years running: the crystal lapel mike is yours to keep, Melv). Best actor: Kenneth Cranham, for his whiningly indulged Camille in *Thérèse Raquin* (BBC-2). Best actress: Kate Nelligan, for An Awful Lot of Varied Work. Best designer: David Myerscough-Jones, for his dank, dripping morgue in *Thérèse Raquin*.

In the house categories awards are as follows:

Titanic Award (for sinking without trace on first outing). Fast early runners in this premier category were *Armchair Critics*, BBC-2's stab at autocriticism, and the excruciating *Around With Rook* (BBC-1). However, it was no contest after the appearance of *The Greeks — A Journey In Space and Time* (BBC-1): a journey also in incredulity, giggledom, and wirewool beards. Individual award: shared between

Arianna Stassinopoulos and Hayley Mills for their interviewing debuts on *Saturday Night at the Mill* (BBC-1).

Missing Link Mug: to Clive James, whose *Unreliable Memoirs* include the vignette of a certain 'Huggins', cartoonist on a Sydney University student magazine. Every TV critic throughout the country has been kicking himself for not having earlier voiced the Archimedean cry:

[He was] the most artistic-looking young man I had ever seen in my two days' experience of artistic-looking young men. He was all pale suede and corduroy... He had a folio under his arm. Surrounding a face so handsome it was like a cartoon, his hair was long and abundant. He was smoking a cigarette about two feet long. Within seconds he was seated, sipping at a beer glass held in one hand while he sketched with the other.

This antipodean Daumier, this 'Huggins', we can exclusively reveal, was the embryonic version of what the world later came to know as Robert Hughes.

'Tis Pity Trophy (for the most shameless moment of incest): to *Did You See?* (BBC-2), whose second number invited Alun Chalfont to discuss the rival ITV and BBC coverage of the American elections. One of the talking heads on one of these rival shows happened to have been the same Alun Chalfont; guess which programme he enjoyed more? Runner-up: *Sorl Baht Boooox* (BBC-1), for thinking it was a good idea to get Robert Morley to review his son Sheridan's new book.

F.R. Leavis Memorial Mug (for critical comments where Parnassian detachment is a little lacking): to the same edition of *Did You See?* for the moment when front-man Ludo Kennedy popped fellow front-man Alun Chalfont this hard-edged question about the performance of fellow-fellow front-man David Dimbleby: 'All I can say about David is that he's as good as his Dad, wouldn't you say, Alun?' Alun didn't demur.

Kenneth Tynan Memorial Subscription to Penthouse (for getting the demotic voice and/or demotic rude things on to the box while Mrs W snoozes): runner-up in both the 'Words' and the 'Action' categories: Dennis Potter. 'Words' winner: Peter Fleming, the lanky Adonis of the tennis circuit, for voicing to Nastase during the Braniff Airways World Doubles what many of us would like to express: 'Fuck you, asshole,' he cried, following it with what David Vine primly called 'a gesture making his feelings felt'. 'Action' winner: *Wildlife on One* (BBC-1), for a couple of very risqué sequences, one involving a scuffling gang-bang of toads, the other a gentle, erotic slice of croc-boffing.

Great Train Robbers' Striped Vest: to Radley College, for managing to filch a couple of months' free publicity from the BBC with *Public School* (BBC-2).

Sanctimony Salver (for moments of extreme unctuousness): to Alan Protheroe, head of BBC News during the Knightsbridge siege, who declared of his own news policy on *The Editors* (BBC-1), 'We will err on the side of goodness.'

Abelard Award (for the unkindest cut of the year): to the chief Soviet plug-puller and frame-snipper, for his memorable work on the open-

ing day of the Moscow Games. As the British *chef de mission* paraded alone with the Olympic flag, the picture was top-sliced so that the standard disappeared: the unexpected comic effect of this was to make it look as if the sole Olympic turn-out of Thatcher's ricket-stricken Britain was a middle-aged pole-vaulter ridiculously totting his own pole.

Pomp and Circumstance Toby Jug (awarded for a special brand of BBC-ness, of pomposity combined with snobbery and fake informativeness). Tom Fleming — always a candidate of strength and stamina when it comes to this trophy — did some hard early running with his commentary on the Queen Mother's 80th birthday celebrations. For once, though, he finally had to give best to an unnamed diplomatic correspondent covering the Nepalese state visit for the *News* (BBC-1). As the jodhpured Eastern monarch descended from his train at Victoria, the soft-voiced flunkey announced, 'This is his first state visit to England, although, as an Old Etonian, he knows the country well.'

George Brown Trophy (awarded annually to George Brown for continuing to be George Brown). This year's winner: George Brown, for an exchange with Clive Jenkins during a *World in Action* (Granada) programme on the Common Market. Brown referred to his 'trade-union colleagues'. Jenkins, sneeringly, 'You haven't got any trade union colleagues — you're just a *Daily Express* hack nowadays.' Brown, gleefully, to camera, 'Don't cut that remark out' — as if it clinched his argument.

Scrooge Sixpence (for the least appealing prize offered in a TV quiz): to *Did You See?* — not again? — where the grand reward for solving a set of questions was a Nancy Mitford paperback, Robert Kee's book on Ireland, plus £10-worth of TV licence stamps.

George Orwell Prize (awarded to public figures hitherto noted for their integrity, who lend their weight to advertising campaigns). Distinguished previous holders in this category include Sir Robert 'Goodyear' Mark and René 'Krona' Cutforth. This year's award to Lawrie McMenemy, moral lodestar of soccer, caught plugging Barbican, the 'alcohol-free lager'. He also wins the *Calvin Seamless Hair Shirt* for the same ad.

Malcolm Allison Silver-Gilt Fedora (for the best sports joke of the season): Runner-up: Barry Humphries, for his advice about interviewing Kerry Packer: 'When you're talking to old Kerry, don't tell him to take the stocking off his head, because he's heard it too many times before.' Winner (again): Malcolm Allison himself, for his remark just before the 1980-81 kickoff: 'I wanna win prizes this season.'

Glass Houses Award: to the front-person on *Saturday Night People* (LWT), whichever of them it was, who presented a searing indictment of how Euro MPs were grossly overpaid.

Finally, there is a new prize instituted this year, the *Gold Chapel Hatpeg* (for statements which make your eyes stand out like one). Hot competition was expected for the Hatpeg, and it duly arrived. In the corporate category, the award goes to the advertising agency with the 'Air UK' account, who thought hard and came up with this breathtaking slogan: 'We're the people who fly people.' In the individual category, the NS is more than a little pleased to declare Bob Langley the first solo Hatpeg-holder. On *Saturday Night at the Mill* (BBC-1) in this year of our Lord 1980, he actually asked a Nigerian dancer: 'What is it about Black Africans — you all have this inherent sense of rhythm.'

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

Sleeping dogs

Dangerous Corner by J. B. PRIESTLEY *Comedy*
Trelawney of the Wells by PINERO *Old Vic*
Shadow Play by NOEL COWARD *Kings Head*
The Revolt by VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM *New End*
Cunning Stunts *Tricycle*

The theatrical year, at least as far as the commercial sector is concerned, seems to have consisted of little but revival after wan revival, so it was no doubt inevitable that Christmas (itself somewhat too often restaged, in my view) should produce yet more. Indeed, *Dangerous Corner* is the third of Priestley's three 'time-plays' to have been exhumed and thrust into the ranks of the living dead within the past six months; and, though perhaps not the least fun, it is much the most theatrically and intellectually naive, a 'well-made play' painstakingly wound up and cranked along by the relentless action of cog upon cog. Though it was actually Priestley's theatrical debut, and first performed nearly half a century ago, it took me back to those dear, dead post-war years when my generation played with Hornby trains and listened to clockwork drama every Saturday at 9.15 p.m. In fact, it begins and very nearly ends with the denouement of what sounds like an archetypal Home Service thriller, coming from a wireless, stage left. A shot, a scream, a pregnant silence, and a plummy voice tells us we've been hearing *The Sleeping Dog* by one Humphrey Stoot.

Priestley has never been a sucker for subtlety, and sleeping dogs, along with dangerous corners, are precisely what *Dangerous Corner* itself turns out to be all about. The true reasons for the 'suicide' of the caddish Martin Caplan are gradually unfurled, and the result is acrimony, hysteria, marital breakdown and psychological disintegration. Martin's virtuous brother Robert flounces offstage to shoot himself. But then we are back to the beginning of the evening again; the identical conversation takes a slightly different turn; and suddenly all the characters are dancing together to the radio, their 'dangerous corner' successfully negotiated and their secrets, psyches, marriages and lives still intact. This is what might have been, maybe what was and is. Illusion and complacency triumph, to the evident approval of Priestley, the dedicated enemy of complacency and illusion.

It seems somewhat pretentious to designate this as a 'time-play' at all, since unlike *I've Been Here Before* and *Time and the Conways*, which are indebted to Ouspensky and Dunne respectively, it claims to illustrate nobody's tendentious chronological thesis. In fact, it says nothing more unconventional than that we can and should choose to mind our p's and q's, keep our masks in place, and maintain our privacy, even with our nearest and dearest; which, if you think about it, is about as conventional a point as could conceivably be made, at any rate in button-lipped Britain. Perhaps the only sensible course for an audience is to leave its collective intellect at home, sit back, and passively enjoy the piece as a period melodrama, a piece of resuscitated *Saturday Night Theatre*, a piece of pantomime-substitute. Many at the opening

night did precisely that, openly laughing when a character accused another of being 'a rotten swine', or inaccurately claimed not to be 'a little stuffed doll', or was redundantly warned not to 'talk like a man in a melodrama'. Clive Francis, Anthony Daniels, Peter Dennis et al did what they could to keep the general cachinnation safely this side of helplessness.

The opposite problem faced Lynne Miller, Bill Fraser, Robert Lindsay et al at the gala opening of *Trelawny*. Perhaps the audience remembered the far subtler production of the same play mounted by Olivier's National Theatre Company in the same auditorium 15 years ago. Perhaps the black ties and the presence of the Queen Mother, glazedly smiling over a bouquet the size of Kew Gardens, had caused a general petrification in stalls and on stage.

Certainly, the atmosphere somewhat froze your reviewer, who had unwittingly gatecrashed the occasion in the same chewed jumper and porridge-spattered bags that once led the late Philip Hope-Wallace to introduce him, with uncharacteristic lack of charity, as 'Derelict Nightingale'. Whatever the truth, Pinero's theatrical fairy-tale came entertainingly to life only in the second half, which is its author's sustained tribute to two substantial ghosts from the earlier 19th century: Edmund Kean, remembered with a catching awe by Fraser's grouchy Gower, and T. W. Robertson, alias 'Tom Wrench', the beginning of one of whose 'cup-and-saucer' comedies is rehearsed for us. My educated guess, however, is that those who've waited to see it until the new year will find that the production as a whole has evolved, thawed, relaxed from beta-minus to beta-plus or thereabouts.

The decay of love within marriage is the prime concern of the rarely-performed *Shadow*

Play, a 'musical fantasy' at once more melancholic and more technically adventurous than most of Coward's work, but not without its tart, pungent passages: 'women like Sibyl Heston ought to be shot', 'sometimes they are', 'not often enough'. Estelle Kohler and John Standing play it all with as much feeling as poise permits. And a marriage which never had any love to decay in the first place is the subject of the interesting *Revolt*, originally performed ten years before *A Doll's House* and, though written in a somewhat gasping, overblown style, in several ways subtler and more truthful than Ibsen's purported masterpiece. The heroine longs to leave her money-obsessed husband. She can even bring herself to desert a child who has 'so much of you in her'. But marital drudgery and the counting-house atmosphere have, she finds, irreparably eroded her imagination and capacity for change; and she skulks ignominiously back to the domestic cage the selfsame night she has proclaimed her intention of escaping it. 'As long as poetry exists in the world, we will never be safe,' sagely concludes Olivier Pierre's hubby, as Susan Hampshire's wife settles down once more to the household accounts. Isn't that what Ibsen's Nora would have done were she, too, more person than tract?

Finally, *Cunning Stunts*, which appears to be Dr Spooner's pet name for the group of women who begin by wishing us a 'great big materialistic Christmas and a hell of an expensive new year', and proceed to speak, sing, mime and generally frolic their way through an attack on most things nuclear. The evening is a bit scattered, and the tone rather too genial for the subject; but lack of stridency is refreshing nowadays, the performers are agile and able, and the audience palpably enjoyed them, jilly sokes, dively lancing, cunning stunts and all.

MUSIC

Andrew Clements

Suntreading

The Complete Music of Carl Ruggles CBS
79225 two records

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music third edition by MICHAEL KENNEDY *Oxford University Press* £9.50

In 1976, the centenary year of Schoenberg and Ives, another less exalted anniversary was almost entirely ignored. Carl Ruggles was their exact contemporary, born in Marion, Massachusetts, and hence sharing Ives's New England spirit and his uncompromising attitude to tradition and truthful musical expression. There, however, the similarity ended. For Ives became a passionate hobby, a sideline to his successful career as insurance salesman; for Ruggles, after a short period in a number of academic posts, life became increasingly hermitic with a painfully slow rate of composition which had produced only a handful of works by his death in 1971. Ives, profligate with his musical invention, worked with and against traditional musics, using hand-me-down material when it suited; Ruggles always started without preconceptions, honing down his music into a puritan, unyielding counterpoint. In its lack of welcoming thematic shapes and its ruthless disregard of common harmonic precepts, Ruggles's music sounds not unlike the atonal

(pre-12-note) works of Schoenberg.

Yet until the release of this splendid two-record set from CBS, mostly made with the Buffalo Philharmonic conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, the quality of Ruggles had to be taken on trust. Tilson Thomas has recorded Ruggles's best known orchestral work *Suntreader* before, but previously the other works were only mystical, aspiring titles: *Angels, Men and Mountains*, *Portals*, *Organum*, *Evocations*. Though it does not include an early piece for violin and piano mentioned in the very helpful sleeve notes, the set seems otherwise to be comprehensive. All the finished, extant works are here; Ruggles destroyed a mass of his early music and the rest of his composition concentrated on refining and reworking these few, short pieces until in the late 1940s his creative energy became channelled more and more towards painting.

The creative path which the surviving music suggests is simple and single-minded. *Men and Mountains*, a three-movement chamber symphony completed in 1924, is the definitive exposition of Ruggles's mature musical language: a fondness for the harsher intervals, for melodic lines that search and yearn, for airy, clean textures and plain orchestral colours. The central movement 'Lilacs' for strings only is an extraordinarily sustained essay in dissonant polyphony, a mesh of sinewy independent lines; the finale 'Marching Mountains' is a triumphant march, completely original in its tone and raw power. It was preceded by *Toys* for soprano and piano, a delicately sprung amalgam of images of childhood, *Vox Clamans in Deserto*, settings of Browning, Meltzer and

Whitman for soprano and chamber orchestra and two instrumental works. *Angels* is a straightforward tripartite hymn for six trumpets (later revised by the composer for four trumpets and three trombones — both versions are recorded here), with definite suggestions of a key centre but dissonant and in flowing, irregular rhythmic shapes; *Men* started out as the third movement of a short symphony but was discarded — a short wordless song for six horns and orchestra, the horns in unison delivering an uncompromising message.

Suntreader (1926-1932) remains Ruggles's masterpiece; fierce, densely argued with textures built out of tight canons and short atonal phrases continually developed and re-imposed and through its concentration reaching a massive, overwhelming climax, the orchestration applied in palette-fulls rather than delicate inflections. The inspiration is sustained in *Portals* for string orchestra (1926), another torso of an incomplete larger work, and in the set of *Evocations* written between 1934 and 1943, first for piano and later scored with revisions for orchestra. The *Evocations* demonstrate in elegant purity many of Ruggles's experiments

with harmony and tonality; the second has an authentic 12-note theme, the first and third build dissonant rhetoric out of fourths and fifths. In Ruggles's best work there are positive links to the finest American music of today, particularly to the equally uncompromising explorations of Elliott Carter; if Michael Tilson Thomas has performed a greater service to his country's musical life than the instigation of these records I have yet to hear of it.

The entry for Ruggles in the new edition of the *Oxford Concise Dictionary* is a good touchstone of the virtues and failings of the reference work as a whole. It has not managed to disentangle the numerous works and parts of works that litter the Ruggles corpus: *Angels* is described as a later revision of an earlier *Men and Angels* (of which it was only one movement), *Vox Clamans* has acquired a chorus as well as soprano, and an intriguing *Polyphonic Composition* for three pianos is listed from 1940. Ambition outstripping accuracy seems to be the failing of the new *Dictionary*; the desire to be up-to-the-minute and topical has given it a sometimes alarming partiality and inconsistency.

The book will tell you the members of the Songmakers' Almanac but not of the Busch Quartet; there is an entry for the young Chilingirian Quartet but none for the Quartetto Italiano, arguably the finest string quartet in the world.

Contemporary music is well represented, but it's difficult to escape the conclusion that the compilers have little familiarity with the works of the composers listed: Elisabeth (called Elizabeth here) Lutyens's autobiography is listed among her operas; Carter's songcycle *A Mirror on which to dwell* is included twice, once correctly, and once as an entirely fictional work for voice and piano, 'Six poems by Elizabeth Bishop'. Anyone who hankers after the more conservative strand in British music will find the most arcane figures of the organ-loft school of composers listed, but a more outward-looking reading might find the omission of all the important younger Hungarian composers — Durko, Balassa, Kurtag — strange, and the discussion of Arturo Benedetti (sic) Michelangeli as 'Remarkable artist, but appearances infrequent' rather perfunctory.

FILMS

John Coleman

Slump '80

Hopscotch (AA) *Plaza; Classic 2, Oxford Street; Odeon, Kensington*

Seems Like Old Times (A) *Columbia; Plaza; Warner*

Somewhere in Time (A) *Ritz; Classic 3, Oxford Street*

Sagging around an inner man who is handsome, witty and wise, Walter Matthau has comfortably run a gamut from slob to snob. His pouched eyes, his sea-legs gait, his reluctant manner of shovelling out speech — all betoken a fellow unconcernedly stooping to conquer. BBC television did everyone a favour, during a Xmas film bonanza otherwise notable for its stress on expensive disasters, by putting him though his acrid, engaging paces. Even in indifferent movies, he commands respectful attention; with a hangdog eyebrow he can speak volumes; slurringly, he retrieves bad scripts. Matthau slumps for intelligence. Ronald Neame's *Hopscotch*, a frolic, would be very unmertry without him. Here he sports with the role of an ace CIA operative, demoted for unorthodoxy. This Miles Kendig thereupon decides to take the low, sneaky, naughty road. Crammed with craft and secrets, he lights out, perversely intent on stirring things up by mailing revelatory fragments of a book in the making to the major powers, giving his new American boss (beautifully bumbling Ned Beatty) a lesson in running wild. Herbert Lom figures as a sympathetic KGB opponent, Sam Waterson admirably pursues, Glenda Jackson — as a rich Austrian widow and ex-colleague — sardonically mouthworks.

There are ingenuities in a scenario which seems more bent on globe-trotting than plotting — the Mozart that enwraps Matthau wherever he goes; his use of his boss's Georgian home as temporary hidey-hole, to be comprehensively demolished as he skips; a late gag with an

exploding plane — but this is basically exhausted material, rarely helped by its writers. It comes on light-hearted and gay, so that one feels a Scrooge for not responding more genially. It urbanely traverses chic geography as if wit were inherent in its travelogue premises. It might have been saying something steely about the super-crud that is contemporary espionage.

At the end of the play, only a memory of Matthau resides, bestriding a good idea as if it were a good idea yet, making like a pro. In a decade when directors have been allowed a undue degree of authorship and acclaim, in a medium which engages so many talents that no honest reviewer can sort the dancer from the dance, the actor may well have received less than his/her credit.

The old year went out with a resounding whimper. Jay Sandrich's *Seems Like Old Times* sets off with an unsummoning title. As if to emphasise the gaucherie — that they do not make them like that any more — a wavering helicopter-shot lurches in on a cliff-hanger of a Monterey shack clearly built at enormous expense. The insecure notion behind this folly is to prove that the stage-bound Neil Simon (whose one-liners one quietly envies) can open out: into space, truth and all points of the emotional compass. The name of Mr Simon's artefact would indicate a time-trip, backwards. The resultant film is a comedy of ill manners, borrowing from the high best of Thirties cinema, burrowing at random. We will now revert to those who can nearly save a costly disaster. Goldie Hawn, a scatty, tremulous, flutter-eyed bundle of moral steel, steps in here as a lawyer for lost causes. One of the lost causes is the motion picture, of course. And, by all that's fine, febrile and cuddly (feminists, hold back: this Hawn packs a fortissimo punch), her appearance holds together this affair of a current husband and a kooky ex-spouse. It's trio-time back on Hollywood Boulevard — the men are Chevy Chase and Charles Grodin, and a very far cry from such as Franchot Tone, William Powell, etc. — and the sparky lady is surrounded by dogs, ethnic and aberrant domestic help, and a script that she does best by when she just dumbly or brightly mimes it. There is a Capra-orny courtroom sequence;

there are a few laughs; there is a hint as to where they threw away the mould when they stopped making authentically droll movies like this. A stridently muffed dinner party is the *locus classicus* for stuff happening at that tired address, Random.

Jeannot Szwarc's *Somewhere in Time*, tremendously elegant and null, serves as a further indicator of where cinema thought it was at in 1980. Not hard to envisage an omnipotent, clueless cabal coming together to sketch out a programme of 'safe' movies, somethings for all the family. A retrograde glance, a softness, a slice of sentiment — these would not come amiss. So set up the saccharine story of a soft, incredible playwright (enacted by Christopher Reeve as if he were still changing from Clark Kent to a super-being in a phone-kiosk or Grand Hotel bedroom), thrust the anecdote back to 1912 from now, concoct him a maimed love-story with a lovely actress (Jane Seymour), reckon the dialogue can take care of itself, photograph it with finesse, trust no one will note the absurdities of the dreamy ongoings, pray for an audience long lost (harshly screwed in to TV), believe in ghosts-of-ghosts. The sweet tenderness aimed at in this stupidity is not just off-target; it is out of this world and others. Miss Seymour beguiles.

Films I could sit through again after a dim year would include: *The Rose; Messidor; The Onion Field; And Justice For All; Richard Pryor Live in Concert; Get Out Your Handkerchiefs; Angi Vera; The Wobblies; The Black Stallion; Airplane!; Une Semaine de Vacances; The Marriage of Maria Braun; Breaker Morant; Babylon.*

Weekend competition

No 2649

Set by A. Boteman

Time for you to let your imagination roam free. Write a piece of verse which contains within its 16 lines at least a dozen (and preferably many more) words and phrases commonly found on notices — No Smoking, Major Road Ahead, etc etc. By 16 January.

Clerihews describing newspapers, journals and magazines.

Report

By Jeff Squiffy

What better present could your comp operative have, as he totters into Great Turnstile after a decidedly merry Christmas, than a bulging file of late-bottled palate-restorers? Benisons to you all, and three smackeroonies for each clerihew printed.

The Guardian charges eighteen pence
For sitting on the fence.
It would greatly increase its readability and profit
By coming off it.

Horse and Hound
Is regarded in the shires as politically sound,
Unlike the deplorably prole
Vole.

Woman's Own
Now dispenses sexual advice with a certain tone,
And considerably more decorum
Than *Forum*.

The Pig Breeders' Gazette
I bet,
Is full of fascinating talk
About pork.

CYRIL HUGHES

Screen
Isn't the magazine
For those at variance
With the Althusserians.

The Sun
Has a simple idea of fun:
It's
Tits.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

The TLS
Never says succinctly No! or Yes!
It elaborates the causes
In relative clauses.

Encounter
Is a bit hard to get aroun' ter.
Though it thinks the Muse is a good lay
It's also been in bed with the CIA.

GAVIN EWART

When you stand in the queue
To buy *New Left Review*
Have you ever thought
Why the queue's so short?

MORAY MCGOWAN

Which?
Is getting rich
Because it knows how to humour
The consumer.

You've only to glance at
The Lancet
To start thinking
You're sinking.

NINA HIBBIN

To enjoy *Men Only*
You've got to be lonely
Or if dated
Frustrated.

The Telegraph
Is no laugh
For the prole
On the dole.

P.W.R. FOOT

If it was the *Daily Mail*
Which was up for sale,
Its only asset
Would be Fred Bassett.

J.C.B. DATE

Dorothy Parker
Used to write for the *Noo Yarker*,
So did Robert Benchley
Evenchly.

I always read the *Observer*
From curver to curver,
But the colour magazine is too chatty
And Habitatory.

The Morning Star
Would far
Rather be read
Than dead.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

You only read *Pravda*
Because you havda:
There's not much sport
But a lot of political thort.

The Observer
Resembles that goddess of wisdom & arts,
Minerva,

About as much as the *Beezer*
Resembles Mother Teresa.

BILL GREENWELL

When it comes to the crunch
The trouble with *Punch*
Is that that's precisely the quality it's not
Got.

MARTIN FAGG

The masses think the *Sun*
Is fun;
Highbrows
Raise their eyebrows.

Private Eye
Will rectify
Any libellous hint
With an apology in very small print.

WENDY COPE

The War Cry
Keeps its circulation high,
By selling, and threatening Nemesis,
To the frequenters of licensed premises.

JOHN SWEETMAN



Tony Miles

Chess

No 211

The Maltese Dragon

I did not produce much sparkling chess in Malta but I did manage the odd entertaining game.

White: L. Ljubojevic **Black:** A. J. Miles
P-K4, P-QB4; 2.N-KB3, P-Q3; 3.P-Q4, PxP; 4.NxP,

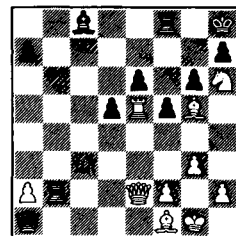
N-KB3; 5.N-QB3, P-KN3. Ljubojevic and I have a long-running battle with the Dragon. In our earlier encounters he tried obscure moves, but without success. Only in the interzonal at Riga did he first try the main line of the Yugoslav attack. Although he got a good position he went astray in the complications and lost. The game was fascinating and I was dissected in various analytical articles, particularly one in a Soviet magazine claiming a forced win for White in the main lines. Since that game he has tried 6.P-B4 (at Skara) and 6.B-QB4 (at London), both before publication of the Soviet analysis and both without success, before returning to the main argument. **6.B-K3, B-N2; 7.P-B3, 0-0; 8.Q-Q2, N-B3; 9.B-QB4, B-Q2; 10.P-KR4, R-B1; 11.B-N3, P-KR4.** This line, seeking to stop White's K-side attack by the simplest means, was pioneered by the American master Soltis in the sixties. Sosonko dabbled with it more recently producing several interesting ideas, but now it is mainly championed by Jonathan Mestel and myself. **12.0-0-0, N-K4; 13.B-N5.** The 'trendy' line. The main alternatives are 13.K-N1, 13.B-R6 and 13.P-N4!? **13... R-B4,** Sosonko's move seeking to advance the Q-side Ps whilst preparing to double (or treble) on the QB file. However, I consider that both 13... N-R2 and 13... N-B5 are better than their reputations. **14.P-B4, N-B5; 15.Q-Q3, P-N4; 16.P-K5, N-N5(!)** Still following our game from Riga, Gufeld won a nice game against A. Rodriguez with 16... Q-N3, to which he appended an '!' when annotating it in *Informator*. However, I distrust the move. Amongst other things 17.BxN, PxR; 18.P-K6 leaves Black with problems on the white squares.

Ljubojevic at last paused for thought here, which pleased me. With a slight shrug of the shoulders he continued with the published 'refutation'. **17.N-K4, R-B1(!)** Better than ... R-Q4 as in our interzonal game, but still thoroughly analysed by the Russians. **18.PxP, P-B3; 19.KR-K1,** the key move of the Soviet analysis which now gave reams of variations to show

that White was winning. (Unfortunately I can't find the article to quote it.) However, my powers of perception are not that deep. All I could see was a B on KN5 that wasn't going to live long and the fact that after **19... PxP; 20.NxQP** no mention was made of the simple **20... K-R2!** I did not analyse in depth. I merely observed that White was going to lose at least two pieces for a rook for an attack which was by no means clear. Much to my relief Ljubojevic now sank into a deep sleep. **21.P-B5!** the only consistent choice. On 21.NxR Black can simply recapture the N — either QxN or ... BxN (probably Q is preferable) — or go for the whole piece with ... N-B7. I can see no refutation of any of these and in the absence of a bright idea for White ... N-B7 might just win a piece for nothing. **21... NxN.** A difficult decision. 21... PxR was also tempting (opening the diagonal for the dragon bishop) but **22.PxPch, K-R1; 23.N-B7ch, RxN; 24.PxR** with the threat of Q-N6 and N-K6 looked dangerous. **22.PxPch, K-R1; 23.B-KB4!** Virtually forced, but this simple move gives Black considerable problems. His minor pieces on the Q file are vulnerable and if the WQ ever gets near KR5 ...! Meanwhile, all White's pieces are beautifully posted. **23... N-K4!** Possibly the only move. Black hopes to solve his problems by replacing the N with the B whilst blocking the central files. Unpleasant alternatives were (a) **23... N-B5; 24.N-B5!** and if ... BxN; **25.QxB** or ... B-B3; **25.BxN, PxR; 26.Q-QR3, Q-N3; 27.R-K7, R-KN1; 28.N-Q6,** or ... N(B5)-K4; **25.BxN, NxR; 26.Q-K2, N-N5; 27.NxB, KxN; 28.Q-K7ch.** (b) **23... N-N2** (to eliminate B(N3)); **24.N-B5, N-B4; 25.Q-Q5.** (c) **23... N-B7; 24.Q-B3.** (d) **23... Q-N3; 24.N-B3** or **N-K6. 24.BxN** else ... B-N5 and Black untangles. **24... PxR; 25.N-B3.** If 25.N-K2 Black can hold everything with R-QB3 and ... B-N5. 25.N-K6 is very interesting. In that case I had intended a little retaliation with ... BxN; **26.BxB, Q-B3! 27.BxR** (if 27.QxN, P-K5 or 27.Q-K2, B-R3ch and ... QxB) **P-K5!** and now if 28.Q-QN3, RxR with two pieces for a rook and a strong initiative. So **28.QxN, QxPch; 29.K-Q2, Q-B6ch! 30.K-K2** (if 30.K-B1, Q-R6ch; 31.K-Q2, B-R3ch; 32.K-K2, Q-K6mate) **Q-K6mate** **Q-B5ch! 31.K-Q2** (if K-K3, B-R3ch) **B-R3ch; 32.R-K3, R-B7ch** and mate next move. **25... P-K5!** The Dragon theme — opening the long diagonal with little regard for material. If instead **25... R-QB3; 26.NxP** is horrible anyway. **26.QxN, PxN; 27.R-K7.**

On 27.QxB the ending after ... QxQ; **28.RxR, PxP** is fascinating: **29.B-B7!** (only move) **QR-Q1; 30.R-QN7!** (must be a white square) and now ... B-Q5 is met by 31. B-N3 and the B must return, while 30... RxR; 31.PxR, B-R3ch; 32.K-N1, B-K6 fails to 33.R-K7! However, all this is irrelevant since Black has the simple, crude but crushing **27... Q-B3!:** (a) **28.P-B3, RxPch! 29.PxR** (K-N1, R-B8ch) **QxPch; 30.B-B2, Q-R6ch! 31.K-Q2, B-R3ch** mating. (b) **28.R-Q5, QxPch; 29.K-Q1, Q-R8ch; 30.K-Q2, B-R3ch; 31.R-K3** (if 31.R-N5, BxRch; 32.PxB, QR-Q1 and when the dust settles White has a lost ending whilst 31.K-Q3, Q-B6ch mops up everything). (c) **28.R-Q3, QxPch; 29.K-Q1, Q-R8ch; 30.K-Q2, B-B6ch; 31.RxB, QxRch; 32.K-Q1, QR-Q1.**

Now White has the terrible threat of 28.Q-K5! but he has overlooked Black's reply **27... B-N5! 28.Q-K5.** The exchange of Qs would be hopeless for White. For example **28.PxP, QxQ; 29.RxQ, RxP** threatening R-B8ch and B-R3ch. So there is nothing else but **28... QxRch!** Not exactly difficult to calculate but nonetheless a pretty finish. **29.KxQ, PxPch; 30.K-Q2, KR-Q1ch; 31.B-Q5** else the pawn queens with check. **31... RxBch. Resigns.** On 32.QxR, P-N8 = Q is curtains.



Problem 211

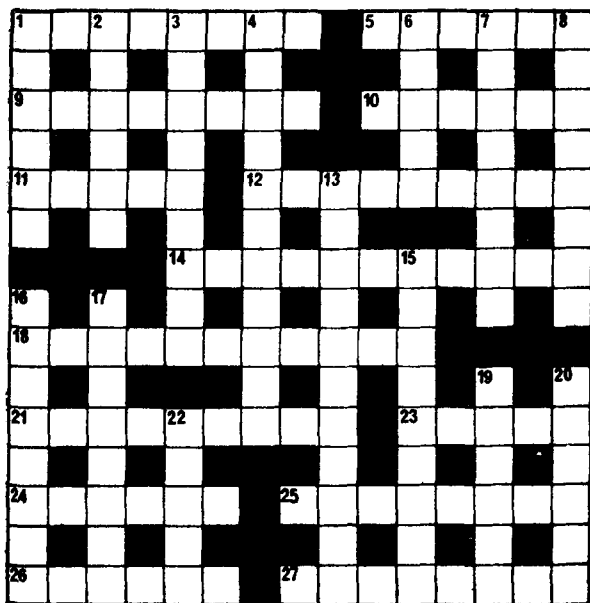
White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 14 January.

Solution to problem 209

1.BxPch! KxB (if ... K-N1; **2.RxP, P-Q4; 3.RxRch, BxR; 4.NxP** wins); **2.RxPch, K-R1; 3.RxPch! KxR; 4.Q-R4ch, K-N2; 5.Q-R6** mate.

Weekend Crossword 1368

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1368, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 13 January.



ACROSS

- 1 Noble lady incorporated in cupboard (8)
- 5 Some ground around the London area is restricted (6)
- 9 Miscarriage of justice puts one in the cooler (8)
- 10 Means of decoration which necessitates rearranging a room first (6)
- 11 Story-teller shows first attitude to be reversed (5)
- 12 Dance and drink provides entertainment for the young (9)
- 14 The leader would be crazier if conservative unity were missing (11)
- 18 Homeliness and its reverse in a cathedral town (11)
- 21 Uncommonly rare visit for parvenu (9)
- 23 Magistrate appearing in three very important cases (5)
- 24 Colour shows one doing wrong (6)
- 25 This mess makes Othello pull back (8)
- 26 Married people are sinewy (6)
- 27 Greek lists of food include drink taken back (8)

DOWN

- 1 It is plain a woman has parents (6)
- 2 Maintain the paper is in it (6)
- 3 Shells provide a bit of speed in vehicles (9)
- 4 Songs performed when one looks round a tribe (11)
- 6 Song sung in lovely rich melody (5)
- 7 Dogs which have a place to sleep in the homes of other animals (8)
- 8 Child who is the opposite of guilty-looking about anything (8)
- 13 Grow abundantly, being in favour of energy and speed (11)
- 15 Disaster started in Tiger Bay possibly, but this is a different site of disaster (3,6)
- 16 Impractical person who makes plan appear wrecked (8)
- 17 Imaginary village spends the morning on a game (8)
- 19 Something to wear for the iron lady (6)
- 20 God holds me in a woman's (6)

22 Uncertain number with fever (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1366



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